

# Hugh Macintosh and Peter Degraives: the story of an Officer and a Gentleman.

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Bachelor of Arts; University of Queensland

Diploma of Education; University of Queensland

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of History by  
Research  
School of History and Classics, University of Tasmania  
May 2011

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To the best of my knowledge and belief this Thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

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Gregory Jefferys

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# Abstract

This work examines the lives of Hugh Macintosh and Peter Degraives who were the founders of Hobart's Cascades Mills and Brewery. In the early years of Hobart Town the activities of these two men had huge long term impact on the social and cultural development of the young colony.

Peter Degraives is, today, primarily remembered as the founder of Cascade Breweries and as one of Tasmania's first industrial entrepreneurs. It is commonly known that within only fifteen years of his arrival in Hobart in 1824, Degraives had built a timber mill, a flour mill, a brewery, a ship building yard, a large farm and a theatre. All of these enterprises were financially successful, while two of them, the brewery and the theatre, are still operating today, almost 200 years later.

Yet there is little in the existing literature that deals in any detail with the 46 years of Degraives' life prior to his arrival in Hobart Town and what few details there are regarding that period, are generally vague or, at best, brief with little or no documentary support other than material that Peter Degraives himself wrote.

The thesis examines the scant supporting evidence of Degraives' pre-colonial life in the existing literature and shows the reason for the brevity and vagueness was that most of what is accepted as the history of Degraives' early life is either exaggerated, glossed over or just plain false. Further there is a large body of information regarding his early life that Degraives' deliberately omitted from any telling of his life story and which has, as a consequence, until now has remained undiscovered; for example the fact that he had been a bankrupt for most of the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and been imprisoned for twelve month for theft in 1810-11. This new evidence paints a very different and more complete picture of Degraives the man, a man of genius and ruthlessness; a man who could successfully turn his mind to almost any task but who desperately sought to obscure the shames of his past. This new material also provides insights that explain the forces that drove Degraives to succeed at any cost while demonstrating the brilliance of a man who had no formal training or genuine expertise in any of the fields in which he claimed to be an authority; and yet was able to manifest results that matched his claims

In contrast to Peter Degraives Major Hugh Macintosh is rarely remembered in his own right and occurs almost as an afterthought when the history of the Cascades Brewery or Peter Degraives is mentioned. Apart from being Degraives' brother-in-law it is sometimes recalled that the two men were partners in the Cascades' foundation and expansion. It is also occasionally or briefly noted that Macintosh was an ex-officer of the Honourable East India Company's Army and that he was the co-owner of the ship *Hope*, which brought him, Degraives, their families, workers and equipment to Hobart. Beyond these small details almost nothing exists describing the life of Hugh Macintosh. This thesis demonstrates that, despite his present historic obscurity, Macintosh was in fact centrally and closely involved with a number of important historic events and personages in England, India, Persia and Australia. For example, without the support of Hugh Macintosh Henry Savery would not have written Australia's first novel, *Quintus Servington*.

The thesis specifically examines the period of the lives of Macintosh and Degraives prior to their arrival in Hobart and why both men chose to obscure and alter that past. After providing an overview of the histories of these two men the work then examines the sources of the mythology that grew around Degraives after he had established himself in Hobart Society and how that mythology was perpetuated to the present day. It will juxtapose popular assumptions about Degraives and Macintosh against the archival record in a process to separate the real backgrounds of Degraives and Macintosh from the stories that have been disseminated about them and will demonstrate the process by which Degraives and Macintosh were able to use the "tyranny of distance" to reinvent their personal histories in Van Diemen's Land.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to all people who have helped me with the completion of this thesis. In particular I would like to thank Hamish Maxwell-Stewart for helping my writing stay relevant to the specific subjects. I would also like to thank John Owen and Jan Jefferys for helping me trim and correct the text. I also thank Anne Blythe for her insights into the life of Sophia Degraives, the connection between Hugh Macintosh and Henry Savery and the existence of William Hugh Macintosh.

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## Introduction

The first few decades of Australian history are dotted with stories of people whose energy and vision created the structures and institutions around which Australia's economy, culture and traditions would grow. Some of these people have been remembered as heroes and others have been remembered as villains and yet others have simply been forgotten. The stories that surround many of these characters have developed into mythologies that have helped perpetuate the "pioneer" traditions associated with early colonial Australia although in some cases these myths bear little resemblance to the historical facts of their subjects' lives.<sup>1</sup> In many cases these mythologies have been perpetuated, largely unchallenged, to the present day in order to foster some sense of connectedness between present day institutions and Australia's limited antiquity.<sup>2</sup> Hidden amongst these myths and pioneer heroes there are persons who arguably made equally significant contributions to early Australian social, cultural or economic development, but who have had their life stories and achievements ignored.<sup>3</sup> In the early years of Hobart Town two men, Hugh Macintosh and his brother-in-law, Peter Degraives, made a huge impact on the economic and cultural development of the young colony. Both men were possessed of the vision and the drive necessary to bring their dreams into reality, but whilst Peter Degraives is today lauded as an enterprising colonial industrialist and entrepreneurial hero, Hugh Macintosh is all but forgotten.<sup>4</sup>

Peter Degraives is primarily remembered as the founder of the Cascade Breweries and as one of Tasmania's first industrial entrepreneurs, an industrial pioneer, and as such fits neatly into Australia's pioneer traditions.<sup>5</sup> It is commonly known that within just fifteen years of his arrival in Hobart in 1824, Degraives had built a timber mill, a flour mill, a brewery, a shipbuilding yard and a theatre. All of these enterprises were

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<sup>1</sup> J. Hirst *Sense and Nonsense in Australian History* (Melbourne) 2005 pp. 74-96

<sup>2</sup> E. Hobsbawm 'Inventing Traditions' *The Invention of Traditions* ed. E. Hobsbawm (Cambridge) 1983 pp. 3-14

<sup>3</sup> Many of these "invisible" heroes were women, whose work and toil and bravery was rarely recorded but without whose support our well known male pioneer heroes could never have achieved the successes to which they lay claim.

<sup>4</sup> M. Bingham *Cascade: A Taste of History* (Hobart) 1991 p.3

<sup>5</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives, Pioneer Industrialist*, Honours Dissertation University of Tasmania 1969

financially successful, while two of them, the brewery and the theatre, are still in operation today, almost 200 years later.<sup>6</sup>

Degraves also created an industrial laboratory at the Cascades complex where he worked on numerous projects, including testing various native Tasmanian tree barks for use in the British cloth dyeing industry and growing yeast for his brewery and for Hobart's bakers.<sup>7</sup> Apart from his successful business enterprises, Peter Degraves is also known to have unsuccessfully attempted a number of other ambitious projects.<sup>8</sup> These included designing a water reticulation system to supply all of Hobart with running water, and a plan for a new Hobart prison, which would have included a treadmill that he considered to be of a more efficient design than anything else then in use. Although, perhaps not surprisingly, he asked the authorities to keep secret his treadmill design, fearing retribution if certain people discovered he had been the designer of the instrument of their torture.

These industrial/entrepreneurial feats are documented in a range of existing histories written over the past one hundred years. These all tell a similar story about a multi-talented entrepreneur and “model English gentleman” who migrated to Van Diemen's Land to found what would become a vast business empire in a fledgling British colony on the outer fringes of the civilised world.<sup>9</sup> In these histories Degraves is variously portrayed as a skilled architect, engineer, mathematician, lawyer, surveyor and a “pioneer industrialist” who, in his middle life, came to Hobart Town from Britain and flourished despite the obstacles presented by the colonial environment.<sup>10</sup> Yet there is little in the existing literature that deals in any detail with the 46 years of Degraves' life prior to his arrival in Hobart Town and what few details there are regarding that period are brief and generally vague with little or no documentary support other than what Degraves himself had written.<sup>11</sup> A close examination of Degraves' pre-colonial life quickly shows the reason for this brevity and vagueness, for most of what is accepted as the history of Degraves' early life is based either on

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<sup>6</sup> L. Myrtle *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online Edition* 2006

<sup>7</sup> E. Markham *Voyage to Van Diemen's Land, aboard the ship Warrior* (London) 1834 pp. 11-13

<sup>8</sup> G. Lloyd *Thirty Three Years in Tasmania and Victoria* (London) 1862 pp. 39-40

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>10</sup> C. Allport *The Degraves Centenary* (Hobart) 1924 p.2; M. Bingham *Cascade; a taste of history* (Hobart) 1991 pp. 1-5

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*

exaggeration or deliberate falsehood. Further, there are many omitted details which until now have remained undiscovered. This new evidence paints a very different, if somewhat more complete, picture of Degraives the man: a man of undoubted genius but who could also be utterly ruthless. He was a man who could turn his mind to almost any challenge and who was desperate to advance himself socially, though to achieve this he had to hide the scandals of his past and had no compunction in lying to do so. Ultimately Degraives would use distance and the relative isolation afforded by Britain's colonial empire to reinvent himself, a tactic that was used, not infrequently, by other persons with similarly sullied reputations.<sup>12</sup> This new material also provides insights that help explain what drove Degraives to succeed at any cost while demonstrating the brilliance of a man who, while he had no formal training or genuine expertise in any of the fields in which he falsely claimed to be a leading authority, was nevertheless able to turn his hand to an impressive array of ventures.

In contrast to Peter Degraives, Major Hugh Macintosh is rarely remembered in his own right although his name is sometimes mentioned in relation to the history of the Cascades Brewery.<sup>13</sup> Usually, however, this is only to record that he was Degraives' brother-in-law and that he was, somehow, a partner in the foundation of the Cascades. It is also occasionally noted that Macintosh had been an officer of the Honourable East India Company's Madras army and, sometimes, that he was the co-owner of the ship *Hope*, which brought him, Degraives, their workers, families and equipment to Hobart. Beyond these small details, however, almost nothing exists describing the life of Hugh Macintosh. This is particularly surprising given his critical role in the establishment and continuance of what was to become known as the 'Degraives' Empire'. Yet, despite his present historical obscurity, Macintosh was centrally involved with a number of important events and personages in England, India, Persia and Australia. There is no clear reason why his history has been ignored other than that, whilst both he and Degraives arrived in Hobart on the threshold of a defining 'boom' period in the young colony's development, Macintosh had the misfortune to die twenty years earlier than Degraives.

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<sup>12</sup> K. McKenzie *Scandal in the Colonies* (Sydney) 2004 pp. 180-184

<sup>13</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives, Pioneer Industrialist*, Honours Dissertation University of Tasmania 1969 p.2



This “boom” period, in which Degraives and Macintosh were fundamentally involved, affected all areas of endeavour in Van Diemen’s Land, but was particularly obvious in agriculture and the whaling and sealing industries.<sup>14</sup> It was a time when Hobart changed from being primarily a convict settlement to a place of industry and enterprise. From the mid 1820s onward Van Diemen’s Land increasingly became an internationally connected place and Hobart, with its famous harbour, a busy hub for the southern ocean whaling and sealing industries, which the two men were able to benefit from.<sup>15</sup> The ship *Hope*, which Macintosh and Degraives owned and which brought them to Hobart, was to play an important role in the colony’s maritime history. In fact this work originally began as a study on the ship *Hope* however as the research progressed it became apparent that it was the story of the ship’s owners that needed to be told. For this was a period in which Van Diemen’s Land was much talked about in Britain as a colony with great prospects and a place where migrants, particularly those with capital, might make a new life for themselves and their families.<sup>16</sup> It was clear that the story of these two men, and the people they interacted with, provided profound insights into the circumstances and processes which led to people making the momentous decision to emigrate to the Australian colonies.

It was fortunate that the research for this thesis began in a period when vast amounts of archival material were being digitalised and placed on the internet. It was through these digital resources, accessible through the university’s databases or through publicly accessible sites, such as Google Books, that I was able to discover that which had previously been hidden or lost.

Both Degraives and Macintosh presented unique challenges in on-line searching as both surnames had multiple spelling options. For example Macintosh is frequently spelt as McIntosh, Mackintosh or even Mac Intosh, whilst Degraives has been spelt De Graves, Degreaves, Degraivers and Degrave. Hugh Macintosh was a particularly interesting challenge because the founder of the Apple/Macintosh computer empire was also named Hugh Macintosh, meaning any internet search specifically focused on

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<sup>14</sup> M. Dillon “Convict Labour and Colonial Society in the Campbell Town Police District: 1820 – 1839” unpublished PhD University of Tasmania 2008 p.48

<sup>15</sup> R. Hartwell *The economic development of Van Diemen’s Land, 1820-1850* (Melbourne) 1953 pp. 139-146

<sup>16</sup> M. Bingham *Cascade: a taste of history*. (Hobart) 1991 pp. 4-29; S. Rickard *Lifelines from Calcutta* (Sydney) 2003 p.66

that name produced hundreds of millions of hits. These factors forced the development of quite sophisticated advanced searching techniques.

Those difficulties aside the digitalisation of archival records meant that that it was possible to search through tens of thousands of pages of text in minutes, a task that would have taken a researcher in the recent past years. It is the digitalisation of historic records that made this thesis possible.

The first section of the thesis will explore the early life of Peter Degraives, from his childhood up to his first abortive attempt to voyage to Van Diemen's Land aboard the *Hope* in October 1821. The second section will examine the life of Hugh Macintosh, a man with a past that was even more colourful and intriguing than that of Degraives himself. The third section will examine the history of the ship *Hope*, a typical colonial vessel of its time, the acquisition of which marked a turning point in the lives of Macintosh and Degraives. This section will also seek to unpick the complex web of competing stories which surround the first, unsuccessful, attempt by Macintosh and Degraives to sail the *Hope* to Van Diemen's Land. In doing so it will examine the controversial conflict between the two men and their Wesleyan passengers and what this conflict tells us about Macintosh and Degraives and the undercurrents of social change that were beginning to swirl through the British world.<sup>17</sup> This last section will also explore the background to the eventually successful voyage of 1823-24. The conclusion will also look at the process by which Degraives and Macintosh were able to reinvent themselves in Van Diemen's Land. It will examine how both men were able to turn the long delays in communications created by the "tyranny of distance" to their advantage by subtly changing key elements of their identities.<sup>18</sup> The conclusion will also explore the histories and mythologies surrounding these two men and the extent to which these can be used to examine identity, history and the invention of tradition in a colonial setting.<sup>19</sup>

Overall this work seeks to juxtapose the perceived, or popular, history of Macintosh and Degraives against the archival record in order to separate the real backgrounds of

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<sup>17</sup> K. McKenzie *A Swindler's Progress* (Sydney) 2010 pp. 293-298

<sup>18</sup> G. Blainey *The Tyranny of Distance* (Melbourne) 1966

<sup>19</sup> E. Hobsbawm 'Inventing Traditions' *The Invention of Traditions* ed. E. Hobsbawm (Cambridge) 1983 pp. 3-14

Macintosh and Degraives from the stories that have been disseminated about them. In the process the thesis will provide important insights into the development of the personalities of these two men and the factors that ultimately brought them to the Australian colonies. This process is not, however, an end in itself. As with all invented traditions, the points of departure from the archival narrative are as revealing as the story they seek to replace in helping to understand how the profound changes occurring within 19<sup>th</sup> century Imperial and Colonial societies were reshaping national and individual identity.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> K. McKenzie *A Swindler's Progress* (Sydney) 2010 pp. 294-298



## Section One: Peter Degraives, Hero or Villain?



Peter Degraives circa 1842  
(artist unknown)

### Chapter 1: Hero of Industry

***Hobart Courier: Monday 3 January 1853 page 3.***

#### Obituary

THE LATE MR. P. DEGRAVES:- Our obituary of this day contains the announcement of the decease of the late Peter Degraives, Esq. Mr. Degraives arrived about 28 years ago in a vessel called the *Hope*, the joint property of himself and Major Mackintosh. His family were in a highly respectable position, of French extraction, Mr. Degraives being the son of an eminent medical practitioner for very many years resident in Dover, and brother of Colonel Degraives, lately deceased at Madras. Mr. Degraives was during a portion of his early life with the celebrated engineer Rennie. The deceased was well known as the proprietor of the extensive brewery and steam sawmills at the Cascades. His career as a colonist has been very successful: he was highly and deservedly esteemed, and leaves a large family resident in the colony.

Peter Degraives arrived in Hobart Town in 1824 with a steam engine, a sawmill and a corn mill, which he had brought out from England on board the *Hope*.<sup>1</sup> There was a significant demand for sawn timber in the young colony and also in Britain, so Degraives' first action was to set up the machinery of the sawmilling plant, which he soon extended to include a flour mill. As the story has it, when he arrived in the

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<sup>1</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 pp. 1-3

colony Degraives' engineering eye immediately saw that water power, freely available from the fast-flowing streams that ran down the steep slopes of Mount Wellington, would be more efficient and cost effective than a steam engine. He thus built his mill on the banks of the Hobart Rivulet where it joined with the Guy Fawkes Rivulet at a place called the Cascades using the skills of the tradesmen he had brought out with him to convert the mill's drive mechanisms from steam to water. To utilise the waters more effectively Degraives built dams across the rivulet. In the short term this was not a problem for the pioneering entrepreneur or anyone else; later, as Hobart's population grew it would become a bone of contention for those who lived downstream who came to see his control of the Hobart Rivulet's headwaters as a significant threat.<sup>2</sup> In 1832, after his release from five years in the Hobart debtor's prison, Degraives added a brewery to his Cascades domain—again utilising the clear, clean waters of the Hobart Rivulet.<sup>3</sup>

After 1832 Degraives consolidated his base at the Cascades then rapidly expanded his business empire to include shipbuilding yards at Battery Point and extensive farmlands. By the end of the 1830s he had also designed, built and, by a circuitous route, come to own Hobart's Theatre Royal, now Australia's oldest still operating theatre.

It has been claimed that by the end of the 1830s Degraives was one of the richest men in Australia (he had an annual income of around £100,000 at a time when a skilled worker's wage was around £50 per annum).<sup>4</sup> When he died at the end of December 1852 at the age of 74, his family was well poised to reap an even greater fortune by supplying the Victorian Gold Rush with flour, beer and timber.<sup>5</sup>

In 1924, a booklet was published to celebrate the centenary of the Cascades Brewery (although the brewery did not actually begin operations until late 1832).<sup>6</sup> Its first chapter was entitled "*The Degraives Centenary*" and was dedicated to Degraives and the dynasty he founded. The author, Cecil Allport, called for the name of Peter

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<sup>2</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives, Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 pp. 30-34

<sup>3</sup> M. Symons *One continuous picnic: a gastronomic history of Australia* (Melbourne) 1982 p.58

<sup>4</sup> M. Reid-Mellreavy *Degraives, P. Australian Dictionary of Biography* 1966 (Melbourne) pp. 302-303

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> C. Allport *A page from the past, the Cascade Brewery: the Degraives' centenary 1824-1924* (Hobart) 1924

Degraves to “ever occupy a prominent place” amongst the captains of Australian enterprise and industry.<sup>7</sup> In addition to being an expert engineer, Allport says Degraves was:

—... an architect of no mean order and also an able draughtsman. He had, moreover, a knowledge of surveying... and was an experienced mathematician well versed in the science of Algebra... an authority on water boring.”<sup>8</sup>

In her 1969 Honours dissertation Beverly Hooper reasonably calls Degraves a “pioneer industrialist” but in another detailed history of Peter Degraves given in a book entitled *Cascade: a taste of history* Degraves moves from a pioneer to a hero.<sup>9</sup> This work, authored by Tasmanian journalist Mike Bingham in 1991, opens with the words:

—“Australians have not always recognised their country’s true heroes and achievers despite professing admiration for individuals who dare to have a go, to challenge the odds and the system, and to follow a dream whatever the setbacks. It is therefore perhaps fortunate that Peter Degraves built his own memorials.”

It is true, as Bingham implies above, that Degraves was largely forgotten by the Australian public for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But in their attempts to write a history for Peter Degraves, and to promote him as a forgotten hero, his “official” biographers do not appear to wonder why he was forgotten. They skip over the fact that Degraves spent five of his first seven years in Van Diemen’s Land in debtor’s prison and that he was generally disliked by a large portion of Hobart’s population.<sup>10</sup> Likewise they gloss over or ignore the controversy that saw Degraves arrested and imprisoned when he first attempted to leave England for Hobart on the *Hope* in 1821 and there is no mention of the fact that he was bankrupted in 1807 and then imprisoned for theft in

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<sup>7</sup> Allport’s family members were peers of the Degraves family.

<sup>8</sup> C. Allport *The Degraves Centenary* (Hobart) 1924 p.10

<sup>9</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraves, Pioneer Industrialist*, 1969

<sup>10</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraves Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 pp. 71-72

1810.<sup>11</sup> Nor is there any mention of the well-documented suffering he directly inflicted on the hungry men, women and children crammed on board the overloaded *Hope*, or of his speculation with his passenger's fare money on London's short-term money market, or the fact that the fare money was not returned to the passengers after the *Hope* was seized by the Authorities in Royal Ramsgate Harbour for being unseaworthy and overcrowded.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed not only did Peter Degraives ~~build~~ his own memorials", as Bingham puts it, but he also built his own history—a history he passed down through his family, his friends and his letters and upon which his biographers have been forced to rely where primary and other documentary sources did not exist or were inaccessible. So who was the real Peter Degraives? To paraphrase Jane Austen ~~Who~~ "Who was his father? Who were his brothers and sisters?" and what did he really do with his life before he sailed to Van Diemen's Land?<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> U.K National Archives HO 47/45/3

<sup>12</sup> S. Benson-Walker *Reminiscences of the Life* (Hobart) 1884 pp. 6-7

<sup>13</sup> Jane Austen in her work *Pride and Prejudice*, emphasises the importance placed on pedigree and family connections in early 19<sup>th</sup> century England in a dialog between the aristocrat, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and Elizabeth Bennet, a Gentleman's daughter, this notion of pedigree and family connections was an important factor in Degraives' life.



## Chapter Two: The Sins of the Father; Dr. Pierre De Graves



Doctor Peter Degrauers by John Kay circa 1786

The existing literature concerning Peter Degrauers' life before he arrived in Hobart Town in 1824 relies almost exclusively on Degrauers' own rendition of his history, either through recollections he told to his peers or from a number of letters and memorials written by Degrauers, mostly from prison, either in England or Hobart.<sup>14</sup> These letters were generally written to promote himself or his case in some form of legal dispute and are now mostly preserved in the Tasmanian State Archives.<sup>15</sup>

Because these documents represented the bulk of the information on Degrauers' pre-Hobart life available to Hooper, Allport and Bingham they were more or less forced to rely on their subject's own rendition of his history. However with the recent improvements of internet-based archival searching aids and the digitalisation of historic records in Australia and overseas it has now become possible to apply a more critical eye to Degrauers' various claims. The most important of these was that he was a wealthy, highly respected member of English society who became a victim of the times when he lost his vast fortune during the Napoleonic War as a result of the

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<sup>14</sup> Tasmanian Archives, *Bonwick Transcripts*, Box 13, pp. 6272-6279

<sup>15</sup> Tasmanian Archives CSO1/1/154/3714

machinations of Bonaparte the tyrant—a claim clearly designed to extract sympathy in the post-war period.<sup>16</sup> There is also an inference in *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia* (1889) that Degraives was actually a member of the French nobility, with one website today claiming that he was the son of the Count Francis Louis De Grave (born: 1726) and English woman, Anne Jones.<sup>17</sup>

As with much else, the sole documentary evidence that he had lost a fortune is contained in the letters and memorials Degraives wrote to Lieutenant Governor Arthur from Hobart gaol between 1826 and 1831, embroidered and supported by stories he told guests after his release.<sup>18</sup> Within the various versions of his tale Degraives claims that he once owned a number of factories in England (Hooper says four) employing three or four thousands of workers, and that he had personally been worth more than one million pounds, which in today's money would have made him almost a billionaire.<sup>19</sup> The facts are very different. Between 1803 and 1805 Degraives owned, in partnership with at least two or three other people, a small cotton mill in Manchester—a business which was dissolved in late 1805 after existing for less than three years.<sup>20</sup> His next business venture was as a ~~warehouse~~ man, dealer, and chapman<sup>21</sup>; also a partnership. This ended when Degraives was declared bankrupt in 1807—a bankruptcy he was not discharged from until at least 1809, if ever.<sup>21</sup> Indeed he never owned any large factories and probably never employed more than a couple of dozen workers, if that.

Issues of debt, bankruptcy and falsehood followed Degraives through most of his life and it was a recurring theme in his personal narrative that he portrayed himself as the victim of other people's machinations, conspiracies or generally malevolent acts. It is, however, a perspective that does not stand up to a close scrutiny, although it might be argued that Degraives' tendency to see himself as a perpetual victim had its psychological origins in his relationship (or perhaps more accurately, lack of a relationship) with his father, Dr. Peter Degraives.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Morris E. *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia* (London) 1889 p.147

<sup>17</sup> [www.sharedtree.com/degravers](http://www.sharedtree.com/degravers) (6 March 2009)

<sup>18</sup> E. Markham *Voyage to Van Dieman's Land* (London) 1834 pp. 13-16

<sup>19</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 pp. 1-2

<sup>20</sup> *London Gazette* June 1805 p.808

<sup>21</sup> *London Gazette* February 1808 p. 189

<sup>22</sup> Tasmanian State Archives *Bonwick Transcripts* Box 13, pp. 6262-6272

All of Peter Degraives' official histories tell a story of his early life similar to the summary in his obituary. All generally agree that he was born in 1778 into the family of an eminent French medical doctor who had married an English woman and that he lived his early life in Dover. The exception is Edward E. Morris who, in *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia*, states that Peter Degraives was "A native of France, driven thence by the terrors of the Revolution" who took refuge in England and became a "naturalised subject".<sup>23</sup> This claim is distinctly odd since the French Revolution did not begin until 1789 and the "Terror" spanned the years 1792-94, by which time the young Peter Degraives had been living in England for at least nine or ten years. Indeed there is abundant evidence that his father began his medical practice in London no later than the beginning of 1780.<sup>24</sup> The strongest of this evidence is the fact that Parish records from the Church of St George the Martyr in Soho show that Peter Degraives was baptised there on 17 December 1780 and that his brother Henry was also baptised in the same church on the 18 September 1782 and that his parents were Peter and Ann Degraives.<sup>25</sup>

Peter Degraives' father is variously described as being an eminent, respected or wealthy doctor, though Degraives stated in an 1810 court document that he "lost his father in infancy and was brought up by his mother and his aunt".<sup>26</sup> However, this "loss" of his father was very different from the death that the term normally implies. "Loss" in this case covertly meant disappearance, though it is likely that the son did wish his father had simply died—for the story of his flamboyant, if notorious father, was certainly an inheritance that he had little wish to be connected with.

Peter Degraives' father was indeed a French doctor who was originally named Pierre De Graives who joined the two components of his French surname to make "Degraives" and anglicised his Christian name to Peter. For the sake of clarity, and to eliminate confusion between father and son, the father will henceforth be referred to as Degraives and his son as Degraives. Although Morris implied that Dr. Degraives

<sup>23</sup> E. Morris *Cassell's Picturesque Australasia* (London) 1889 p.147

<sup>24</sup> *London Courant and Westminster Chronicle* 11<sup>th</sup> July 1780

<sup>25</sup> Register of Baptisms, Parish St George the Martyr (London) 1780 p. 167

<sup>26</sup> Taken from Peter Degraives' written defence to the charge of felony in the Lancaster Assizes in 1810, part of a bundle of court documents relating to the case held at the British National Archives: Item details HO 47/45/3

and his family fled the “Terror”, it is more likely that he left France for England to further his medical career in the late 1770s, long before the Terror became a serious issue for French citizens. The only published details about the life of Degrauers come from a small biographical insert which was included in the 1992 reprint of his 1786 self-published book *A Complete Physico-Medical and Chirurgical Treatise on the Human Eye*.<sup>27</sup>

Therein, the author described himself as Dr. Peter Degrauers, M.D. Professor of Anatomy and Physiology, the world authority on diseases of the eye. The book was probably published three times; in France in the 1770s, in London in 1780 and, finally, in an extended form and with additional illustrations, in Edinburgh in 1786. The original editions of his book did not contain a biography, though their text is full of little anecdotes highlighting the author’s medical skills. The biography found in the reprinted version (part of a series called *The Classics of Ophthalmology Library* published by Gryphon) was put together by the publisher as an introduction to the work of Degrauers, but sheds no light on the doctor’s life prior to his arrival in England. It does admit, though, that he was largely unknown and had been regarded as a quack by most 19<sup>th</sup> century doctors. Certainly it seems that the treatment of eye diseases was an area of medicine that attracted quacks there being many who were willing to part with money in the hope of restoring their sight.<sup>28</sup>

Fortunately for later researchers Degrauers was an extremely able self-promoter who used the newspapers and other periodicals to keep himself and his medical practice in the public eye. Because of this there exists in the recently digitalised, historic London and Edinburgh press a body of material that is sufficient to give an insight into his life after his arrival in England—a life that took many a twist and turn and which was never far from scandal.

In the foreword of each English edition of his book, Degrauers politely drew the reader’s attention to the fact that he was exclusively responsible for translating his treatise from French to English. The first English edition was a fairly simple

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<sup>27</sup> P. Degrauers. *A Complete Physico-Medical and Chirurgical Treatise on the Human Eye*.” (Reprint, New York) 1992

<sup>28</sup> anon. ‘Quackery in Relation to Eye Diseases’ *The British Medical Journal* Vol.1 no. 3194 (March 1922) p.446

instructional textbook on treating diseases of the eye and contained a few basic drawings of cross-sections of the eye. The 1786 edition was a particularly lavish production with high-quality engravings and an additional section for diseases of the ear. This edition was probably paid for by the doctor's short lived second wife, Elizabeth Baikie, and included an etched portrait of Dr. Degrauers done by the famous Scottish barber, etcher and portrait artist John Kay.<sup>29</sup>

While details are sketchy, it can be reasonably assumed that Degrauers married Peter Degraues' English mother, Anne, sometime in the late 1770s and that their marriage produced at least two children: Peter, probably in 1778, and his younger brother Henry, in the July 1782.<sup>30</sup> During the early 1780s records from a wide variety of London newspapers show that Degrauers operated a medical practice in London out of his premises at Red Lion Square in Soho, where he and his young family also had their London residence.

His practice, whilst being general, had a special interest in diseases of the human eye and, later the ear. Degrauers' primary claim to fame appears to be that he performed the (at that time) very rare and difficult operation of removing cataracts from the eyes of his patients using a clever little surgical knife called a ~~k~~ystitome". This was an instrument with a fine doubled edged blade that was normally retracted inside of a thin sheath. The blade could be made to protrude at right angles to the sheath by pressing a button. The kystitome was Dr Degrauers' tool of trade and in his book he described exactly how it was used in an account that takes more than ten pages and reads somewhat like a handyman's guide to removing cataracts. Keeping in mind that Degrauers was assuming that the ~~o~~perator" following his written instructions had not performed the procedure previously, he advises that: ~~H~~f the patient be of a good constitution...it will be unnecessary to prepare him for the operation by cooling drinks, bleeding or other indications..."

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<sup>29</sup> „anon' *The Oxford Journal* 1869, p.312

<sup>30</sup> Peter Degraues claimed his birthday to be 24 December 1778 however the parish baptism records of the church of St John the Martyr show him being born in Soho in November 1780. Why Degraues would want to fake his birth date is unclear. The same parish records show his brother Henry's birth date accurately as they correspond with the dates held in the British Library *India Office Records* L/MIL/9/110/f 268.

The operation, he stressed, should be performed on a sturdy table in a room darkened to dilate the patient's iris and that a strong assistant should stand behind to hold his head immobile (there was no local anaesthetic and the patient was fully conscious throughout the operation). Meanwhile the operator slipped a speculum (a kind of eyeball-sized spoon) down between the eye socket and the rear of the eye to hold the eyelid off the eyeball and keep the whole eye still. Once the patient's head was firmly in the grip of the operator's assistant, Degrauers advised that a sharp knife be rested gently on the eye's membrane and inserted into the eye ~~with~~ "with a slight pressure"; the operator taking great care not to cut the iris. The knife should then be carefully removed from the eye. At this point Dr Degrauers suggested that the ~~operator~~ "should explain to the patient how important it was to keep his eye immobile ~~and~~ that the pains he is about to suffer are not really as violent as he might imagine."<sup>31</sup>

Once a cut in the eye was made to the depth of the cataract the sheath of the kystitome was ~~introduced~~ "into the interior of the globe" of the eye via the fresh cut, the button was pushed to ~~have~~ "have the blade out of its sheath" and cuts were made left and right and up and down around the cataract. If the patient was co-operating by holding his eye still and was not thrashing about or screaming the cataract was extracted by the operator squeezing the globe of the eye ~~softly~~ "between his fingers until the cataract popped out of the eye via the passage created by the knives. Once the operation was complete Degrauers suggested a clean linen pad should be strapped over the eye and the patient bled by the arm regularly."<sup>32</sup> But even after regular bleedings the doctor advised that there were still ~~numerous~~ "dangerous consequences" from complications that may await the patient ~~which~~ "might puzzle very much a young beginner."

How successful the doctor was at removing cataracts, and how many of his patients were pleased with the results, is not known, Degrauers, however, certainly promoted himself as the leading expert on treating diseases of the human eye in advertisements and ~~advertorials~~ "in various newspapers and also through the sales of his book,

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<sup>31</sup> Degrauers P. *A Complete Physico-Medical and Chirurgical Treatise on the Human Eye*. (New York) 1992 p. 175

<sup>32</sup> Degrauers P. *A Complete Physico-Medical and Chirurgical Treatise on the Human Eye* (New York) 1992 pp 171 to 180.

which he advertised heavily in London newspapers from 1780 onwards.<sup>33</sup> During the period from 1780 to 1784, as well as running his London practice, Degrauers also gave a regular series of well-advertised lectures, complete with live surgical demonstrations. Thus, according to the *Morning Herald and Advertiser* of 10 February 1781:

This Day Dr Degrauers of the Red Lion Square will deliver the sixth lecture of his Physico-medical and Chirurgical course on the human eye. Such gentlemen students of the hospitals, who have obtained a ticket for the whole course are desired to take their seats as they come in on the right hand side of the theatre to prevent confusion as the preceding evenings. The subject of this lecture will consist in the accurate description of all the medical diseases incident to the human eye, together with the best method to cure them. The chair to be taken precisely at seven o'clock in the evening. The chirurgical disorders will come on the Saturday following. Terms of attendance are two guineas for which a Ticket is delivered at Dr Degrauers' residence at Red-Lion Square ...

Such advertisements usually contained a mention of his book, which was almost certainly also offered for sale at the lectures. Two guineas was a huge amount of money in the 1780s, representing about the same as a master mason's weekly wage or a month's wages for a labourer.<sup>34</sup> Thus the advertised lectures provided Degrauers with a threefold income stream (with the ticket and book sales being supplemented by whatever actual medical work he gained through the increased awareness of his skills). This in itself was more important than it might at first seem as Degrauers was able to exploit a loophole in the convention which prevented English medical practitioners from placing paid advertisements for their practices until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>35</sup> For Degrauers was not advertising his practice but his lectures and book. Without such a strategy, as a recent French émigré, he would have had to rely purely on word of mouth and social contacts to build up his medical practice, and associated income, in London.

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<sup>33</sup> *Public Advertiser* July 5<sup>th</sup> 1780; *London Courant and Westminster Chronicle* 11<sup>th</sup> July 1780; *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* 7<sup>th</sup> July 1780; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* 18<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1780 etc. etc. *Caledonian Mercury* 20<sup>th</sup> January 1787 p.3

<sup>34</sup> A. Gibson *Prices, food and Wages in Scotland 1550 to 1780* (London) 1995 pp. 254-380

<sup>35</sup> S. Lock *The Oxford Illustrated Companion to Medicine* (Oxford) 2001 p.11

That Degrauers was a pioneer of dubious forms of newspaper advertising and direct sales techniques is acknowledged by Hamish Mathison who, in his 1998 paper “~~T~~ropes of Well Being: Advertisement and the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Scottish Periodic Press” cites Degrauers’ later advertising in Edinburgh newspapers as an early example of deceptive advertising. For example in the *Caledonian Times* of 11 November 1786, Degrauers placed an “open letter” supposedly from six of his former patients extensively praising his work and skills. Mathison maintains that the letter was specifically designed to blur the lines between a genuine factual article and an advertisement.<sup>36</sup>

Degrauers began using this form of advertising in 1780 and continued to refine it through the 1780s in both London and Edinburgh. Indeed, he may well have been the pioneer of the ploy of supporting a paid advertisement with a fictitious “~~t~~estimonial” letter or a supposed news article. Examples of his advertisements, which were strategically placed on the same page as the following “~~n~~ews” article, appeared in the *Whitehall Evening Post* on 18 May 1784, and again a week later, in the *London Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* on 28 May 1784.

### **Medical News**

We are informed Dr Degrauers has attended the lovely Miss Sh----y and cured the complaint in her eyes which has baffled the attempts of several medical gentlemen...

The “~~n~~ews” piece then went on to promote Degrauers’ book and lectures. This suggests that the doctor possessed a shrewd business mind and that he used whatever means he could to promote himself, his lectures, his books and his reputation, none of which might ever have gained any attention from his peers or the public had it not been for the self-promotion campaign he sustained for most of the 1780s.<sup>37</sup>

Another interesting insight into Degrauers’ approach to his lectures is that the notices for these and accompanying “~~n~~ews” pieces often occurred on the newspapers’ “~~E~~ntertainment” page, alongside reports of stage performances and other diversions.

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<sup>36</sup> H. Mathison , “~~T~~ropes of Well Being: Advertisement and the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Scottish Periodic Press” *Prose 21* 1998, pp. 214-16

<sup>37</sup> H. Mathison “~~T~~ropes of Well Being: Advertisement and the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Scottish Periodic Press” *Prose 21*; 1998, p. 212



Perhaps Degrauers knew that there was an implicit offer of entertainment of an unusual kind in his promise in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* of 28 July 1781:

A great many patients shall be dressed and operated upon in the lecture room... By such practical demonstrations those who attend this course shall undoubtedly acquire in very short time... practice of the most delicate part of the physic and surgery that would cost many years of study without such an opportunity.

Another ~~news~~ article, also on the entertainment page of the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* of 19 February 1783, offered not only the chance to watch a live performance of Degrauers removing cataracts from the eyes of conscious patients, but also the opportunity to witness an event of Biblical proportions. Degrauers promised to restore the sight of a 14-year-old boy who had been born blind. It can only be assumed that the operation was not a success as there was no mention of the miracle in London's newspapers over the following days. We can only speculate as to the boy's fate and how Degrauers came by this unfortunate guinea pig in the first place. Who was this boy? And whilst one must wonder from whence Degrauers acquired the patients for his live performances, it would be fair to state that his procedural format certainly placed another connotation on the term ~~operating theatre~~.

Regardless of the success or otherwise of such interesting public performances, Degrauers' lectures and medical practice in London continued until the end of 1784. In November that year, he launched another advertising blitz, running at least six advertisements in various London newspapers that month. These were for a series of three lectures aimed specifically at surgeons from the army and navy. The first advertisement appeared in the *St James Chronicle* on 18 November in the format of an open letter, which began;

—To His Majesties Navy and Army Surgeons. Gentlemen: Next week I will deliver the first of three lectures on the human eye ...”

The advertisement went on to describe the benefits of attendance before concluding with a plug for his book. Yet, there is no evidence that this final lecture series ever

took place for it was at this time that Degrauers suddenly disappeared from the London scene.

It is not known why Degrauers decamped from London, where both his family and medical practice were located, though it may have had something to do with this last lecture series. Perhaps something went terribly wrong during one of his surgical demonstrations? Or perhaps it was something as simple as issues of debt?

When Degrauers reappeared in the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, in late 1786 he began advertising a fresh round of lectures as well as his medical practice.<sup>38</sup> Conditions, or his expectations, had changed significantly, however, for now he charged a single, simple fee of half a crown per consultation—whilst the cost of attending his lectures had dropped from two guineas to one shilling. As there were 22 shillings in a guinea this was a considerable devaluation of the entrance fee, which might have reflected a less affluent potential audience or an attempt to get higher attendance figures in a smaller market.<sup>39</sup>

It is regularly mentioned in third-party references to Degrauers that he was a man with a high opinion of himself who was generally able to convince others of the worth of his self-evaluation. There were many, however, who regarded him as a quack—a label that some of his wilder publicity-seeking antics would have done little to dispel.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps the best example of this was when he became associated with the famous case of the convicted Edinburgh criminal Deacon William Brodie, on whose character and actions Robert Louise Stevenson is said to have based his novel *Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde*.<sup>41</sup>

Brodie, on the surface a well-respected and charming member of Edinburgh's social elite, led a double life, secretly frequenting houses of ill-repute and given to a clutch of “degrading” vices.<sup>42</sup> Keeping company with “desperate men...of the lowest grade and most abandoned principles”, he financed his vices and gambling debts through

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<sup>38</sup> *Oxford Journal* 1869, p.312

<sup>39</sup> *Caledonian Mercury* 20<sup>th</sup> January 1787 p.3

<sup>40</sup> (Anon) *Edinburgh Medical Journal* 1905, p.87

<sup>41</sup> E. Simpson *The Robert Louis Stevenson Originals* (London) 2005 p.109

<sup>42</sup> J. Kay *A Series of Original Portraits and Caricatures with Biographical Sketches and Illustrative Anecdotes* 1838 p.257

undertaking a series of brazen burglaries and audacious robberies in the houses of his affluent friends and relatives as well as business and government premises to which he had regular access.<sup>43</sup>

Brodie's crime spree went on for a number of years until he was eventually caught and sentenced to death by hanging. At his trial the witnesses were extremely impressed by how calmly he seemed to accept the death sentence. Even as he mounted the scaffold he chatted calmly with those of his friends who had come to witness the hanging. What the gathered public did not know was that Brodie had done a deal with Dr. Degravers.

Degravers had visited the condemned man and convinced Brodie that he would be able to bring him back to life after he had been executed and on this basis the doctor was paid a considerable sum by Brodie before the day of execution.<sup>44</sup> Degravers accompanied Brodie to the gallows and immediately after the execution Brodie's body was taken down from the scaffold, put in a waiting cart and rushed to Degravers' surgery where the Doctor lanced the dead man's temples and arms at points which he had marked on Brodie immediately before the execution. Needless to say, his attempted resurrection of Deacon was unsuccessful and, once again, the good doctor's opinion of his skills exceeded his actual ability.

Despite this failure, Degravers' Edinburgh medical practice (backed up by his undoubted skills of self-promotion and misleading advertising) had been doing well enough for him to both move up in society and to obtain sufficient credit from the various businesses in town to enable him to live in the manner to which he was accustomed. Thus it was that he met and married Elisabeth Baikie, the daughter of a propertied well-to-do Orkney family and sister of Robert Baikie M.P., the Seventh Earl of Tankerness. Miss Baikie, who owned a pleasant, fully furnished home in Edinburgh and came with a £700 dowry, married Dr. Degravers in Edinburgh's Roman Catholic Cathedral at Midlothian, on 29 April 1787. Their union did not last long for a year later the new Mrs Degravers "died on child bed" in giving birth to a daughter, Eliza. Family and friends of the deceased ensured that her home and money

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<sup>43</sup> G. Leary *Lives of great and celebrated characters of all ages* (New York) 1860 p.193

<sup>44</sup> J. Gibson *Deacon Brodie Father to Jekyll and Hyde* (Edinburgh) 1993, p.117

went directly to the couple's new daughter rather than to Degrauers, whose dubious character and rapidly accumulating debts around town had become known.<sup>45</sup>

Degrauers responded to this manoeuvre by his dead wife's relatives by fleeing Edinburgh and his considerable debts, once more disappearing from view for several years.<sup>46</sup> As it appears that Doctor Degrauers and Elisabeth Baikie were both Roman Catholics (they were married in the Roman Catholic cathedral in Edinburgh) it seems extremely unlikely that he had divorced his previous wife Ann, the mother of his sons Peter and Henry. Even for non-Roman Catholics a divorce was almost impossible to obtain in the late eighteenth century. As the first Mrs Degrauers did not die until at least after the end of 1821, it is certain that the doctor's second marriage was bigamous.<sup>47</sup>

As a result of his actions in both Edinburgh and London Dr Degrauers would have found it almost impossible to practise medicine in any city in the British Isles. Finding his options limited Degrauers took to the sea. The next phase of his colourful life is preserved in letters he wrote in 1790 to the owner of the British slave-trading company James Rogers & Co. From these it is clear that, sometime after fleeing Edinburgh, Degrauers gained employment as the medical officer on board a slave ship called the *Pearl*, owned by the aforesaid Bath-based slave-trading company. In a letter to his employer, James Rogers, Degrauers shows himself to be a strong supporter of the slave trade.

I have now finished the *History of the Kingdom of Haifock*, commonly called Old Calabar... I have not mentioned the transactions of your ship masters, nor those of others, leading to the ideas which a copy of my journal have naturally raised within you; the barbarians would most undoubtedly have been productive of another argument to abolish the slave trade, which obviously is clearly demonstrated humane in the actual state of that part of Africa.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> An interesting consequence of Doctor Degrauers' two years in Edinburgh was that his son Peter now had a half sister, Eliza Degrauers. Eliza went on to marry Captain Malcolm Cowan of the Royal Navy; their grandson William became the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Tankerness after his uncle died without issue.

<sup>46</sup> J. Kay *A series of Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings* (Edinburgh) 1838 p.262

<sup>47</sup> Bonwick Transcripts, *Letter from Degrauers to Bathurst* 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1822 Box 13, p. 6275 Tasmanian State Archives.

<sup>48</sup> PRO, Chancery Masters Exhibits C/107/7 part 1 *J.P Degrauers to James Rogers*. Bath 1891.

There is no evidence that the doctor's *History of the Kingdom of Haifock* was ever published and unfortunately the manuscript cannot be located.

It is likely that Degraives entered employment with Rogers and Co. almost immediately after fleeing Edinburgh, probably in early 1788 when the British Parliament enacted *Dolben's Act*, which made it a legal requirement that all British slave ships carry a surgeon on board. *Dolben's Act* was an attempt by Parliament to reduce the mortality rate of slaves and crew aboard slave ships carrying slaves from the African coast to the various ports of the British Empire. For Degraives the timing of the Act was fortuitous as it created both a demand for surgeons and favourable salary conditions. Under the provisions of the Act doctors were not only paid a base wage, but also a bonus based on the rate of mortality on board their ship. This amounted to around one shilling per slave that made it to the slave market in good health and a further incentive of £50 if the mortality rate for a voyage was kept below two percent.<sup>49</sup> As well as these monetary incentives, the ship's surgeon was usually entitled to two slaves at the end of the journey, one male and one female.<sup>50</sup> Despite the pay, however, the life of a slave ship's surgeon could not be considered an easy one. Degraives would have had to live on board in squalid, fetid conditions for months and would have spent a considerable amount of time every day below decks in the stench and misery of the slave quarters. In these conditions he was expected to treat a wide range of illness, from dysentery and diarrhoea to syphilis and typhoid as well as the injuries from whippings, friction sores, rat bites and other infected wounds.<sup>51</sup> Indeed it was the combination of the terrible working conditions and the excellent remuneration that attracted only a specific type of medical man to this job, leading Doctor Falconbridge to note that

—..surgeons employed in the Guinea trade are generally driven to engage in so disagreeable an employ by the confined state of their finances.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> R. Sheridan 'The Guinea Surgeons of the Middle Passage' *International Journal of African Historical Studies* Vol. 14, No. 4 (1981) p.610

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> R. Sheridan 'The Guinea Surgeons of the Middle Passage' *International Journal of African Historical Studies* Vol. 14, No. 4 (1981) p.603

<sup>52</sup> A. Falconbridge *An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* (London) 1788 p.28

As well as being responsible for the health of the slaves and the crew, slave ship surgeons were also required to keep a detailed log of the illnesses and causes of death of all persons aboard their ship.<sup>53</sup>

While the combination of an attractive salary and a convenient means to escape his creditors in Edinburgh goes a long way to explaining Degrauers' decision to take up this occupation, his change of circumstance occasioned another considerable drop in professional and social standing. Nevertheless, it was certainly better than having to endure the shame of debtors' prison. Indeed, Degrauers seems always to have tried to make the best of whatever situation he found himself in, regardless of the cost to others.

As well as writing his book on the history of the Kingdom of Haifock, while on board the *Pearl*, Degrauers also turned his attention to the problem of accurately calculating longitude. Here he was influenced by the substantial rewards (between £10,000 and £20,000) offered by the British Government's Longitude Board for the discovery of methods to improve navigational accuracy and safety. The primary objective of the Longitude Board was to stimulate the discovery of an accurate and reliable method for calculating longitude whilst at sea, but the Board also included rewards for other advancements in navigation and shipping.

In 1794, Degrauers and a French colleague named Henry Ould submitted to the Board a paper called 'The Longitude discovered, by a new Mathematical Instrument, called *Graphor*.' Unfortunately for Degrauers, contemporary developments in determining longitude with the chronometer and improvements to the sextant had largely satisfied the Board's requirements in this area and their paper was rejected. Despite this setback Degrauers continued to promote the *Graphor*, and its associated 'New Mathematics' maintaining that its advantages had not been fully appreciated. To help his cause he resorted to his familiar tactics by employing the London press to promote his invention. He and Ould published an open letter to the Board of

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<sup>53</sup>R Steckel and R. Jensen 'New evidence on the Causes of Slave and Crew Mortality in the Atlantic Slave Trade' *Journal of Economic History* Vol 46 No.1 March 1986 pp.57-77. R. Haines & R. Shlomowitz 'Explaining the Mortality Decline in Eighteenth Century British Slave Trade' *Historic Economics Review* New Series Vol.53, No. 2 May 2000 pp262-265

Longitude in several London newspapers and journals. In this letter they explained the basics of the “New Mathematics” in order to try to pressure the Board to reconsider the rejection of their invention. Sadly for the two inventors, not only was the Board not moved, but the tactic resulted in several unfavourable reviews of the Graphor and the associated New Mathematics such as the one below by Hookham and Carpenter in the *Monthly Catalogue*.

“*The Longitude discovered, by a new Mathematical Instrument, called Graphor.*”

We have heard so often of the Longitude being discovered that, on reading the title of this Book, we were very willing to make allowances for the author’s sanguine expectations, and to be reconciled to the event, if it should be found that this grand geographical mystery had eluded his most accurate researches. With this resignation we opened the work; but notwithstanding the positive assurances of the writer, that the secret was discovered, our natural incredulity took possession of us, when we found that the Board of Longitude had been applied to, but had not designed to take notice of the communication...”<sup>54</sup>

Degravers’ response to these rejections was to offer his system up for public scrutiny by appointment at his residence. Indeed, he went further, advertising an opportunity for the public to invest by subscription in his invention through an interesting instrument involving an “independent” trustee. Hookham and Carpenter described the device in *The Critical Review*:

“Before the public is favoured with a description of this wonderful instrument (the Graphor), a subscription is requested, which, when it amounts to £20,000 is to be, at the discretion of twelve able persons chosen by the subscribers, who are to examine the merits of the instrument, and if it answers, the inventors are to call upon the subscribers for the money. In the mean time, any person wishing to have a sight of the instrument, is desired to send a letter, post paid, to Messrs. Peter Degravers, M.D. and Henry Ould, at the Literary Assembly, No. 15. Old Bond Street; and a few days after they will receive a letter with an appointment to see it.”

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<sup>54</sup> Hookham and Carpenter *The Critical Review* Ed. T Smollett (London) 1794 p.469

Unfortunately for Degrauers and Ould, the public perception of the Graphor's commercial potential appears to have been affected by the negative reviews and the ambitious target of £20,000 in subscriptions was never reached. The result of these public rebuffs was that the Graphor, the "New Mathematics" and Degrauers disappeared from London altogether and the 1794 attempt to claim a financial reward from the Longitude Board and subsequent media coverage appears to have been the last time that the flamboyant doctor attempted to employ the press in an exercise of self-promotion.



### Chapter Three: Businessman, Bankrupt and Burglar

While Dr Degravers was executing his various schemes, plans and exploits it is not clear exactly what his son, Peter, was doing other than that he was not with his father. As there is general agreement that Peter Degraves was born in 1778, he would have been about 6 or 7 years old when his father fled London. We also know that in later life Degraves would say that this was when his father died.<sup>55</sup> While we do not know the details, it can be reasonably assumed, based on his later accomplishments, that Peter Degraves must have been attending a good school in England and that he had yet to drop the offending *r* from his surname.

Likewise we do not know how Dr Degravers' first wife, Mrs Ann Degravers, supported her young family. The most likely explanation is that she turned to her parents who, the evidence suggests, were wealthy. There is some indication, from Peter Degraves' writings that his maternal Aunt also supported, or lived with, the fatherless family.<sup>56</sup>

Apart from these meagre details we know very little of Peter Degraves' early family life other than that he had at least one sibling, his younger brother Henry, who had probably been named by Dr Degravers after his friend and co-inventor of the Graphor, Henry Ould.<sup>57</sup> It is the young Henry Degraves/Degravers' military records that confirm, without doubt, that Dr Pierre De Gravers/Degravers was the father of Peter and Henry. When Henry enlisted as a cadet in 1799 his surname was spelt Degravers, but sometime after he began service in India the spelling changed to Degraves.<sup>58</sup> The same military records show that Henry's father's name was Peter Degravers. We do not know the exact reason for the family's decision to change the spelling of their name, but it would be reasonable to assume that Mrs Degravers had eventually been made aware of the bigamous and debt-ridden status of her husband in Edinburgh. The

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<sup>55</sup> On page four of Peter Degraves' written defence, which was read to the jury in his 1810 felony trial, he states that —. I am the son of a Physician in Town, whose loss I have had to lament from infancy...

<sup>56</sup> Degraves' written defence read to jury Lancaster Assizes 1810 British National Archives HO 47/45/3

<sup>57</sup> Peter Degraves later named his eldest son after his brother Henry, breaking the family tradition common in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries of naming the eldest son after the father.

<sup>58</sup> *British Library Collections, India office*; Degravers, Henry IOR/L/MIL/9/255/151v

existence of such a scandal would have made some disassociation from him a social necessity.

At this point a brief look at the life of Henry Degraives is important in developing an understanding of the various relationships which would become pivotal in the life of his brother; for while Peter Degraives followed his ambitions along an entrepreneurial path into trade and industry, his brother Henry chose the more secure path of the military. After completing his studies as a cadet in 1799, Henry joined the East India Company Army in Madras.<sup>59</sup> By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a commission in the Indian Army had become valuable due to the access it gave officers to trade opportunities as well as unofficial tax receipts from local businesses. For this reason it not only required a personal nomination from one of the East India Company's Court of Directors but also cost a significant sum of money. That Henry Degraives was able to meet both of these requirements suggests that he and his brother had influential or wealthy patrons.<sup>60</sup>

As a career soldier Henry Degraives spent most of his life in India around the area of Madras, progressing up through the ranks to eventually become a Lieutenant Colonel. In Madras Henry Degraives joined the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Native Infantry as a second lieutenant and served under the direct command of Captain Hugh Macintosh. In 1803 he fought in the Marathas Wars of 1803 up and was involved in the "White Mutiny" of 1809 when the officers of the East India Company's Army commanding the Native Infantry in Madras rebelled against the rule of the newly appointed Governor, Sir George Barlow. At this time Hugh Macintosh was in command of the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Native Infantry and Henry Degraives was one of his Lieutenants.<sup>61</sup> The interesting and close relationship between Henry Degraives and Captain Macintosh will be dealt with in greater detail in the chapter concerning Macintosh.<sup>62</sup> Henry Degraives predeceased his brother, Peter, by almost 20 years, dying in Wallajahbad near Madras in 1834 at the age of 52.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *The India Office and Burma Office List* (Bombay) 1824 p.218

<sup>60</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1926 p.3

<sup>61</sup> *Oriental Herald* 1827, p. 202

<sup>62</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1924 p. 259

<sup>63</sup> British Library *India Office Records* L/MIL/9/110/ f.268

Peter Degraives is always said to have grown up in Dover, however, no records can be found to confirm this. It is more likely that he spent his first years at Red Lion Square in Soho in his father's home and possibly he later may have moved to Dover.

Degraives describes his education as ~~liberal~~"". While in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century a ~~classical~~" education implied one that placed paramount importance on fluency in Greek, Latin and the classics, a ~~liberal~~" education was defined as that:

—...which makes a man an intellectual freeman, as opposed to that which makes a man a tool, an instrument for the accomplishment of some aim or object. The aim of the liberal education ... is the right use of the realised capital of extant knowledge...’’<sup>64</sup>

Because Degraives, in his sworn statement to the jury in his 1810 trial, said that he went straight into an apprenticeship with a mercantile business at the completion of his school years it can reasonably be claimed that, later, contradictory, reports concerning the activities and studies he undertook in his early life are false. Interestingly most of these reports emanated from Degraives himself.

These reports are found in the various existing histories of Degraives life. One reoccurring claim is that Degraives studied law, and according to Hooper ~~he~~ spent about two years studying at Gray's Inn, one of the three Inns of Court seated in London’’.<sup>65</sup> These claims all appear to be based around letters Degraives wrote to Governor Arthur from Hobart goal between 1826 and 1832. Degraives also claimed that he worked for the famous English physicist William Nicholson, who had been his father's neighbour in Red Lion Square. As he put it:

I was for several years principal assistant to the late Mr Nicholson Esq, formerly secretary to the Chamber of Arts, editor of the Philosophical Journal, and many other scientific works, engineer to almost all the water works in London, and the vicinity, and also those at Gosport and Portsmouth and many other engineering undertakings, and previous to the experience

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<sup>64</sup> W. Atkinson *Liberal Education of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, (New York) 1878 p.1

<sup>65</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives; Pioneer Industrialist* (Hobart) 1969 p.1

which Mr Nicholson's office, laboratory and factory afforded me...<sup>66</sup>

These claims serve well to illustrate Degraives' propensity for self-promotion and exaggeration. For the facts are that in all the writings about the life and activities of William Nicholson (1753–1815), including a biography written by Nicholson's eldest son held in Oxford's Bodleian Library, there is no mention of Peter Degraives in any form and certainly not as Nicholson's principal assistant.<sup>67</sup> Also Nicholson had no factory, was not responsible for "almost all the water works in London" and was only an occasional consultant for the water works at Gosport and Portsmouth, which position he quit in 1810 before the completion of the works.<sup>68</sup> It is interesting that Degraives exaggerated William Nicholson's achievements in order to boost his own claimed levels of expertise. In fact, for the five years up until to his death in 1815 Nicholson was in poor health and in a state of financial "embarrassment".<sup>69</sup>

Hooper, Allport and Bingham also all state that Degraives studied engineering under the famous Scottish civil engineer John Rennie. From 1791 on Rennie did indeed operate an engineering business at Blackfriars in London where, for about a decade, he specialised in building canals then bridges and docks.<sup>70</sup> Interestingly Rennie mixed in the same circles as William Nicholson, circles which included James Watt and Matthew Boulton.<sup>71</sup> Further insight into how Degraives constructed his past is given by the fact that Rennie, Nicholson and Boulton's residences, and Gray's Inn, were all located within a short distance of where Degraives grew up so it is likely that Degraives was familiar enough with each entity to either fabricate or exaggerate a relationship with them. For while it is possible that, for example, the young Degraives and Rennie may have met, there are problems with the conventional accounts which imply a long and intimate relationship. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century to 'study' under an engineer such as Rennie implied an apprenticeship, of which the standard term was seven

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<sup>66</sup> Tasmanian State Archives *Letter from Peter Degraives to Arthur*, CSO 1/234/5665/ p.222

<sup>67</sup> W. Nicholson *The Life of William Nicholson*, (unpublished Bodleian Library Oxford) 1868

<sup>68</sup> 'Memoir of the Late Mr. W. Nicholson' *The Gentleman's Magazine* Vol. 119 Jan. 1816 pp. 70- 71

<sup>69</sup> 'Memoir of the Late Mr. W. Nicholson' *The Gentleman's Magazine* Vol. 119 Jan. 1816 p.71

<sup>70</sup> R. Giblin *The Early History of Tasmania Vol. 2* (Sydney) 1928 p328; [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/498171/John-Rennie](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/498171/John-Rennie) (14 Oct. 2009)

<sup>71</sup> A. Musson & E. Robinson 'Origins of Engineering in Lancashire' *Journal of Economic History* Vol. 20. No. 2 (June 1960) pp. 219-220. R. Jones 'The Plain Story of James Watt' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, Vol.24, No. 2 (April 1970) pp.206-211

years.<sup>72</sup> Indeed Giblin, in his book *The Early History of Tasmania*, specifically states that Degraives served an apprenticeship with John Rennie and had actually developed a practice in civil engineering prior to deciding to take his family to Hobart.<sup>73</sup> However in his trial in the Assizes in 1810 Degraives swears that he was apprenticed to the London mercantile house of Railton and Ranking until at least the end of the 1790s. Once he left Railton and Ranking we know that he ran several small businesses in and around Manchester and London from about 1803 until 1810, so it is difficult to imagine how he could have managed to study under Rennie and Nicholson and also study law at the Inns of Court in that same period of time.<sup>74</sup> Yet Degraives' obituary in the *Hobart Courier* states that Degraives was "with Rennie in his early life", which can certainly be taken to mean that he studied with Rennie no later than in his mid twenties. Despite the obvious problems with timing, Bingham, Hooper, Giblin and Allport all contend that Peter Degraives also studied architecture and mathematics. Further, *The Companion to Tasmanian History* states that he was an engineer who also studied Law and Architecture, while Allport adds that Degraives was a highly competent surveyor and also "an authority on boring for water" and that he supervised important water boring projects when he carried out work for both the Duchess of Buccleuch and the Marquis of Stafford in the County of Surrey. Degraives also mentions these supposed water works in his letters.

There are very strong reasons to doubt that Degraives supervised, or even took part in, these works.<sup>75</sup> Thomas Allen's book *A History of the County of Surrey* published in 1831 describes both these events in detail. It states that the work was "done under the direction of Mr. Selfe from Kingston, assisted by Whiteland, from Richmond." There is no mention of Degraives' involvement on any level, this despite the fact that Degraives (from Hobart prison) supplied the *Colonial Times* with the following details:

In the Duchess of Buccleuch's garden, at Richmond, Mr. Degraives superintended the sinking of boring rods to the depth of 364 feet when the finest rock water imaginable began to issue 56 feet above the ground... The Marquis of Stafford was

<sup>72</sup> P. Ford 'A case Study of European Training and Technological Transfer in the Antebellum Period' *Technology and Culture* Vol. 34 No. 2 (April 1993) pp. 272-273

<sup>73</sup> R. Giblin *The Early History of Tasmania Vol 2* (Sydney) 1928 p.328

<sup>74</sup> *Kent's Directory* for the year 1794 'Cities of London and Westminster'. Degraives' written defence read to jury Lancaster Assizes 1810 British National Archives HO 47/45/3

in consequence induced to try a similar experiment, which Mr Degraives superintended with equal success; for, after having bored to a depth of 352 feet water rose 51 feet above the surface, affording a constant supply of water to his Lordship's premises.<sup>76</sup>

However, Allen's *History of Surrey* states that the Marquis' bore was the first one dug, that the water rose 15 feet above the surface and that a small engine, erected by a Mr. Euston, pumped the water a further +10 feet perpendicular at a distance of 140 yards from the engine to the house, having a reservoir on the top, which is always supplied." The Duchess of Buccleuch's bore, being of lower elevation and closer to the river was only 254 feet deep and the water rose 26 feet above the surface.<sup>77</sup>

It is possible that Degraives either witnessed or heard of these two projects, but there is no evidence at all of his involvement as a supervisor or on any other level. At best, as with his claims to have studied with so many famous people, Degraives' appears to have manipulated the truth, exaggerating the importance of his involvement, by exploiting the poor communication systems of the time to his own advantage (a skill he may have learned from his father). The most likely reason for this particular piece of self-promotion was that he probably hoped that his claim of having worked for members of the nobility would give a considerable boost to his social and professional status in the young Colony. He may also have hoped that it might increase his chances of an early release from the Hobart goal where, at the time he wrote the letter, he had spent almost one year.

In stark contrast to the mythology which has grown around Degraives the archival material, from the Manchester Trade Directory of 1804, reveals that at this time he was operating as a manufacturer of muslin and other articles in Manchester. That he does not appear in Manchester Trade Directory of 1802 or in the subsequent 1806 directory indicates that this business was relatively short lived.<sup>78</sup> Confirmation of this is provided by a notice that appeared in the *London Gazette* of 1805 in which Degraives advertised that:

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<sup>76</sup> *Colonial Times* Hobart 16<sup>th</sup> February 1827 p.4

<sup>77</sup> T. Allen *A History of the County of Surrey* (London) 1831 pp. 432-433

<sup>78</sup> R. Lewis, archivist at Manchester Archives; personal communication, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009

... the Partnership heretofore  
fulfilling between Peter Degraives, of Manchester, in  
the County of Lancaster, James Lane, of the City of London  
and George Dickinson, of Kirkby Steven, in the county of  
Westmoreland, Cotton-Manufacturers, was dissolved by  
Consent on the 25<sup>th</sup> Day of March last, so far as respects  
the said George Dickinson. All debts due to or owing by  
the said Concern will be received and paid by the said Peter  
Degraives and James Lane. As witness the Hands of the  
Parties the 16<sup>th</sup> day of April 1805,  
Peter Degraives  
James Lane  
George Dickinson

The new business of Degraives and Lane (less Dickinson) also did not last very long. In 1807 the *London Gazette* gave notice that, as the result of a hearing on 19 May 1807, the Commissioners of the Commission of Bankrupts had awarded against “... *Peter Degraives of Cheapside in the City of London and of Manchester... Warehouseman, Dealer, Chapman... carrying out business under the firm of Peter Degraives and Company*”.<sup>79</sup> The result of this was that Degraives was declared bankrupt and his estate and effects were sold off to pay a dividend to his creditors. In the same year Degraives sued his business partner, James Lane. Two years later whilst still bankrupt, he also sued a Mr. McMullen.<sup>80</sup>

Much can be learned about Degraives’ method of conducting business by examining the cotton manufacturing enterprise he set up in association with Lane and Dickinson. The premises at Kirkby Stephen were originally purchased by Dickinson in 1803 as a farmhouse with orchards and outbuildings. Sometime before 1807 the property was purchased by Peter Degraives and his business ~~partner~~” Deborah Decharme, with Dickinson becoming a ~~tenant~~” in the house.<sup>81</sup> The ownership of the property was then transferred to the Company of Degraives, Lane and Dickson & Co and during this

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<sup>79</sup> *London Gazette*, 1807, pages 187, 653 and 800

<sup>80</sup> *English Law Reports* (London) 1903 p.932

<sup>81</sup> Mrs Deborah Decharme was a wealthy, London based, widow of French extraction who seems to have been (the still unmarried) Peter Degraives’ financial backer. The fact that Decharme was appointed as assignee for both Degraives and his partner Lane when the two men were declared bankrupt also raises interesting questions about the exact nature of the relationship.

period a factory building was constructed. It seems unlikely that the factory actually ever produced anything as the Company went into bankruptcy less than 12 months after the building was completed.<sup>82</sup>

The basis of the relationship between Degraives and Deborah Decharme, a French widow, is uncertain, but in late 1809 Deborah Decharme, as the assignee of the bankrupt Degraives, sued (unsuccessfully) Degraives' ex-partner James Lane over the proceeds of a promissory note that had been made out to Lane and Degraives jointly.<sup>83</sup> This was not the only court action brought by or against Degraives in the period between 1806 and 1810, when at least six other separate matters are known to have been brought before the courts (there may have been more). These were all civil matters except for a criminal case in the Lancaster Assizes, which occurred in 1810.<sup>84</sup>

The court records from his 1810 Lancaster Assizes trial are also illuminating. These show that Degraives was convicted of larceny for stealing a large quantity of goods, mostly parcels of an expensive French fabric called cambric, valued at between £2,000 and £3,000 (an extremely large sum of money in 1810). The stolen goods belonged to John Parsons, a "friend" who had left Degraives' employ to start his own business as a merchant in Manchester. Degraives stole the goods from a warehouse owned by Thomas Bainbridge, also a "friend" and former business partner. This conviction resulted in Degraives being sentenced to 12 months in prison. It is a good indication of his social and family connections that, despite being convicted by a jury and subsequently serving one year in King's Gate prison, Peter Degraives was pardoned after his release in 1811.<sup>85</sup> Compare Degraives' sentence with that of the less socially connected James Munro, a 20-year-old boatswain, who, in 1799, was found guilty in the Old Bailey of stealing 20 yards of calico valued at £12 and sentenced to transportation to New South Wales for seven years.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Braithwaite *A Guide-book to Kirkby Stephen*, (London) 1922

<sup>83</sup> J. Campbell *Reports of Cases Determined in the Courts of Kings Bench*, London 1811 p.324. The assignee of a bankrupt is the person appointed by the court to manage the bankrupt's affairs for the benefit of the bankrupt's creditors. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century this was often the major creditor. If Decharme was Degraives' major creditor, as this suggests, then it is likely that she was also the source of his finance.

<sup>84</sup> UK National Archives HO 47/45/3

<sup>85</sup> UK National Archives HO 47/45/3

<sup>86</sup> Australian Dictionary of Biography Online *Munro, James* (26 June 2009)



The witness statements from the Lancaster trial provide surprising detail of the crime and also offer further insights into Peter Degraives' mode of operation. The trial was held in Manchester at the end of March 1810. Earlier that month, Degraives had travelled to Lancashire from London (where he claims to have owned a very large business). His aim, apparently, was to visit Parsons (who had previously been employed as head clerk by Degraives' in London) and Bainbridge, who owned a large warehouse in Manchester which Degraives occasionally used.<sup>87</sup> In one of the lockable rooms of that warehouse Parsons had stored a large quantity of French cambric, a very finely woven lightweight cotton fabric often used for lace and expensive handkerchiefs.

In late February 1810 Degraives' new head clerk, Mr Swan, had discovered an error in the accounts that favoured one of the firm's customers, a Mr Bland. Mr Bland had also been Degraives' partner in some business transactions and often acted as his agent. Degraives immediately assumed that the mistake was a deliberate conspiracy by Bland and Parsons to defraud him but, rather than confronting the two men, he decided to take matters into his own hands.

Arriving in Manchester on the 10<sup>th</sup> March Degraives pretended to visit Bainbridge and Parsons for purely social reasons, having lunch and dinner with them. The three men arranged to eat together again on the evening of Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> March, but in the afternoon of that day Degraives pretended to be sick –from having drunk too much wine” the preceding evening and asked to be excused from their dinner engagement.

In the meantime Degraives had obtained a key to Parsons' storeroom at Bainbridge's warehouse and, late on Thursday evening, around 11 p.m., knowing Bainbridge and Parsons were then dining together, he entered the storeroom room and removed three or four large parcels of cambric. He transported the stolen goods in the back of a hired chaise to the Red Lion Hotel where he had already rented a room. There he repacked the fabric into trunks, which he then transported to the White Lion Hotel where he had

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<sup>87</sup> Witnesses in this trial stated that Degraives was in business in a very large way in London but court documents from a bankruptcy trial that took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 1809 (Decharme and Waine Vs Lane) state that in December 1809 Peter Degraives was still bankrupt. It is therefore likely that the business Degraives was running in 1809 and 1810 was owned by a third –silent” party, probably Decharme.

rented another room for the purpose of storing the stolen goods. The night's work complete Degraives returned to his room at the Red Lion.

The following morning Degraives met Parsons for a meal. An upset Parsons told him that all his cambric was gone. Degraives went with Parsons to inspect the room and pointed out anchor marks drawn in chalk around the room. These, he ventured, were perhaps excise marks and that the excise officers had come in the night and seized Parsons' goods for outstanding duty. Degraives, feigning a desire to help Parsons, suggested he should speak to a lawyer to see what might be done. He was even good enough to suggest a couple of lawyers he knew with expertise in excise law. Degraives then left Parsons for a few hours, but they met later that day, at about 2 p.m., when they dined with Bainbridge at the Commercial Inn. There Parsons informed the others that he had ~~made~~ made enquiries and was pretty certain no seizure had been made by the Excise Office" and that it must have been a robbery.

Degraives professed that he still considered it unlikely that the goods had been stolen and that there was probably still a chance that excise officers had them. He then asked Bainbridge and Parsons for a loan of £10 for his coach fare back to London as he had run out of cash. Parsons lent him the money.

With Parsons' £10 in his pocket Degraives returned to the White Lion hotel in a hired chaise only to find two excise officers waiting for him. As it turned out the owners of the Red Lion and the White Lion knew each other and had compared notes about the man who had rented rooms for himself in both their establishments. Deciding that there was something suspicious going on they informed the Excise Office that they suspected Degraives of smuggling. When the officer in charge demanded to see Degraives' excise receipts Degraives, rather than admit he had stolen the fabrics, pretended he had actually smuggled the goods and tried to bribe the excise officers by offering them £30 to turn a blind eye. Unfortunately for Degraives one of the officers was also a magistrate and so Degraives was immediately arrested for smuggling and taken to the New Bailey Gaol. It was only after the arrest that it was discovered that the goods had been stolen and the charge was changed from smuggling to theft. Degraives claimed in his defence that he did not steal the goods, but that the prosecutor and others had swindled him and so he had merely tried to ~~try~~ resolve the

matter.” However, Degraives’ London clerk, Mr. Swan, testified in Court that he saw nothing in Bland’s accounts that indicated a deliberate intention to swindle Degraives rather it was a series of compounded bookkeeping errors.

Degraives was tried by a judge and jury, found guilty and sentenced to one year in prison, which he served in full. He was released in 1811 and less than a year later he received a full pardon. The reason for the pardon is not clear, but it was the first of a series of pleadings in which Degraives was able to mysteriously reverse detrimental findings made against him made by government officials.<sup>88</sup>

The fact that Degraives was involved in at least six separate court actions between 1805 and 1810 and spent a year in prison may account for the claims that he studied law. He may even have busied himself in such studies while in prison, rather than in the Inns of Court as he was later to claim. Whatever the case, he would certainly have found further use for legal studies through the remainder of his life for he was both a prolific litigant and a regular target for litigation. Degraives later stated in a letter to Governor Arthur, that, when he finally left England on the *Hope* in 1823, he was involved in numerous civil proceedings. These were under way in several courts around London and were at various stages of resolution upon which he expected to receive monies.<sup>89</sup> Before the end of his life Degraives was to be imprisoned at least three more times and frequently became involved in both civil and criminal court cases.<sup>90</sup>

While Peter Degraives was attempting to grow a business empire in London and Manchester he was also establishing a family. Sometime around 1807, when as a bankrupt his goods and chattels were being sold off at the London Guild Hall to enable a dividend to be paid to his creditors, the 29 year old Peter Degraives married Sophia Macintosh, the 18 year old sister of Captain Hugh Macintosh his brother Henry’s commanding officer in the Madras Native Infantry. Sophia was born in 1789, the daughter of an influential Inverness family.<sup>91</sup> It appears that her family moved to England in the late 1780s where she and her brother Hugh were well educated in the

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<sup>88</sup> UK National Archives HO 47/45/3

<sup>89</sup> Tasmanian State Archives CSO1/1/154/3714 p.9

<sup>90</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives, pioneer industrialist* (Hobart) 1969 pp. 72-73

<sup>91</sup> D. MacMillan *Scotland and Australia 1788 – 1850* (Oxford) 1967 p.85

Classics, reading both Latin and Greek. That her family allowed Sophia to be formally educated was relatively unusual for the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>92</sup> They were also able to afford the price of a cadetship for Hugh in the East India Company's army. Given Peter Degraives propensity for concealing the truth it is unlikely that Sophia Macintosh or her parents knew he was bankrupt at the time of their marriage. Sophia gave birth to the couple's first child, a girl also named Sophia, in July 1808; sadly she was either still born or died almost immediately after birth as she is listed as having been buried at Christchurch in Southwark on 9 July 1808.<sup>93</sup>

Peter and Sophia's next child, Louisa, was born in 1809. She was followed on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1811 by Henry. Both children were christened at the church of St George the Martyr in London, where Peter Degraives and his brother Henry had also been christened. Court documents surviving from his 1810 criminal trial indicate that, even after the failure of his business there, Degraives maintained a house in Manchester, but that his family home was in Cheapside in London. It is unlikely that these homes were owned by Degraives as he was still a bankrupt until at least July 1809, when dividends from the proceeds of the sale of his assets were being paid to his creditors.<sup>94</sup> It is likely that his homes were owned by proxies, such as a trusted friend or family member; a common tactic employed by bankrupts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and still in use today.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> There is anecdotal evidence that while her husband was in prison in Hobart from 1826 to 1831 Sophia Degraives helped support her family by teaching from her home in Hobart.

<sup>93</sup> Sophia had nine more children; in 1816 she gave birth to another girl whom they also named Sophia.

<sup>94</sup> *London Gazette* 1809 p.800

<sup>95</sup> K. McKenzie *Scandal in the Colonies* (Sydney) 2004 pp. 161-162

## Chapter Four: Highland Exile

Sometime during his year in prison Degraives was moved from the New Bailey Gaol in Manchester to London (probably to be closer to his family), where he completed his sentence in King's Bench prison and was released at the end of 1811. Once released from jail he fled from London –Society” where, despite his eventual pardon, his ruined reputation would have made success in business almost impossible. Like his father before him, Degraives headed north to Scotland; though not to Edinburgh (where his half sister had been born).<sup>96</sup> Instead he headed for the Highlands where his wife's family had the necessary influence and connections that he would need to open doors for him. Degraives' first venture was on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, on the western frontiers of Scotland. Exactly why he chose the Outer Hebrides is not certain, though its distance from London would certainly have been a factor. It is also possible that Sophia's family had some connections or assets on Lewis which Degraives might have been able to utilise.

The Isle of Lewis is the main island of the Outer Hebrides off Scotland's west coast and is generally considered part of the Highlands. Originally Lewis was part of the domain of the Macleod clan, but was wrested from them in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century by the Mackenzies and by 1610 had become part of the Seaforth Estates, which were held by the chief of the Mackenzies, Lord Seaforth.<sup>97</sup> On the Isle of Lewis Peter Degraives continued to chase his dream of making a great fortune, this time through a business scheme to cure large volumes of fish.<sup>98</sup> Whilst fish speculation in Scotland might seem a long jump from trading in fabrics in London and Manchester, it contained the combination of wheeling and dealing and inventive engineering which seemed to have become part of Degraives' *modus operandi*. The fish-curing project also had another characteristic that suited Degraives, a location that offered him the opportunity

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<sup>96</sup> It is worth noting here that it is extremely likely that, by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Eliza Degraives had become closely acquainted with her father's other family as records from London's parish marriage registers show she and Malcolm Cowan were married at St Marylebone's church, only a few blocks from the Degraives' home in Red Lion Square, on 6 September 1807.

<sup>97</sup> P. Symes \_James Alexander Stewart Mackenzie: Portrait of a private note issuer' *International Bank Note Society Journal*, Volume 37, No. 1, 1998

<sup>98</sup> A Fularton *The Topographical and Historical Gazetteer of Scotland. Volume 1* (Edinburgh) 1853 p.760

to make a fresh start and fast profits and where he could either conceal or re-invent his past.

Around the time Degraives arrived on the Isle of Lewis (probably in 1813) fortunes had been made over the preceding decade selling cured meat and fish to the Army and Navy during Britain's extended war with Napoleon's forces. It is likely that Degraives saw there was a chance to use his technical genius (and whatever remaining capital he possessed) to make fast profits through industrialising the catching, curing and selling of large volumes of fish to the military. To this end Degraives hired a team of Dutch fishermen to man his boats and sent them to fish the seas around Lewis where prodigious quantities of fish could be caught quickly.<sup>99</sup> It is not clear whether he built his own fish-curing factory or if he utilised an existing premises. Based on his track record and his later activities in Hobart, however, it was most likely that he built his own curing works by bringing in a local partner with either capital or property or both.

Although on paper the project appeared certain to succeed, Degraives' fishing enterprise was thwarted by a combination of bad timing, bad luck and his tendency to overreach himself.<sup>100</sup> For just when his holdings of stocks of cured fish was at its highest, the war with France ended and the price of all foodstuffs, particularly preserved meats such as salted beef and cured fish, plummeted by up to 90 percent. Degraives was thus left holding a vast stockpile of cured fish that was probably worth less than it had cost him to acquire.<sup>101</sup>

After the collapse of his fishing venture it appears that Degraives either still owned or leased a coastal sailing vessel with which he was able to continue to trade in fish, whale oil and other goods. To make a profit he acquired marine produce from where ever he could around the Scottish coast then carried it from the northern ends of the British Isles down to the busy markets in London. Thus in January 1819 he sailed from Stornaway, the main port on the Isle of Lewis, to London with a cargo that included a load of oil from 150 dolphins killed and distilled at Broad Bay on Lewis.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> A Fularton *The Topographical and Historical Gazetteer of Scotland. Vol: 1.*(Edinburgh) 1853 p.759

<sup>100</sup> *ibid*

<sup>101</sup> T. Devine Temporary Migration and the Scottish Highlands in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. *The Economic History Review* New Series Vol. 32, No. 3 (Aug. 1979) p.345

<sup>102</sup> The Seaforth Muniments *Letters of P. Degraives, 1819.* National Archives of Scotland GD46/17/51

That he was forced to eke a living from such a humble trade did not dampen Degraives' ambitions for he had soon set his sights on other, grander, ventures.<sup>103</sup>

Sometime before 1819 Degraives had decided that Stornaway, where he had originally set up his fish-curing enterprise, offered other opportunities that he might yet be able exploit. He saw that the resources and the economy of Lewis were being poorly managed and he was certain that he had the skills and vision to improve both through the use of his engineering and industrial skills whilst in the process making a handsome profit for himself.<sup>104</sup> With these possibilities in mind he devised a fresh set of innovative projects that he succeeded in presenting to the new owners of the Isle of Lewis, Sir James Stewart-Mackenzie and his wife, Mary. James Alexander Stewart-Mackenzie was the grandson of the 6th Earl of Galloway, the nephew of the 7th Earl and the son of Vice-Admiral Keith Stewart.<sup>105</sup> However it was to Mrs Stewart Mackenzie, daughter and heir of the late Lord Seaforth that the estate of the Isle of Lewis belonged for Lord Seaforth had died leaving no surviving male heirs.<sup>106</sup>

The fate of the Seaforth Estate was part of Highland lore, which had it that in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century a curse was placed on the line of the chiefs of the Mackenzie clan by a Scottish seer named Kenneth Mackenzie. This seer had been employed for some years by the then Lord Seaforth and his wife as their household prophet but when he gave a prophecy that greatly displeased Lady Seaforth (related to the fidelity of her husband) she had him executed on the charge of sorcery. The mode of execution was by immersion in a barrel of boiling tar. The seer's last words were a curse that the last chief of the Mackenzie line would be deaf and dumb and would have four sons who predeceased him and that his estates would be brought to ruin. As the result of contracting scarlet fever in his youth Francis Humberston Mackenzie (who inherited

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<sup>103</sup> The Seaforth Muniments *Letters of P. Degraives, 1819*. National Archives of Scotland GD46/17/51

<sup>104</sup> The Seaforth Muniments *Letters of P. Degraives, 1819*. National Archives of Scotland GD46/17/51

<sup>105</sup> In May 1817 Stewart married Lady Mary Hood, who was the widow of Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, and the eldest daughter of Francis Mackenzie – Lord Seaforth. Henceforth he took his wife's family name, thus becoming James Stewart-Mackenzie. Later in his varied career James Stewart-Mackenzie was appointed the Governor of Ceylon.

<sup>106</sup> How Degraives gained access to the Mackenzie-Stewarts is an interesting question as this couple existed in a social stratum which would normally precluded someone like Degraives. There is some evidence to suggest that either his half-sister or his wife and his wife's family, the Macintoshes, had a social connection with Mary Mackenzie who was the same age as Eliza Degraives and Sophia Degraives. This point in time also coincided with the return to Scotland from Persia of Degraives' brother-in-law Captain Macintosh, who may have helped Degraives in the matter of an introduction

the title after his elder brother was killed in a naval battle with the Marathas in India) was deaf and, for a period, dumb. He had four sons who all predeceased him, effectively ending the Seaforth/Mackenzie male line that had stretched back at least four hundred years.<sup>107</sup> After the death of Lord Seaforth in 1815, there being no male heirs, the title expired but the remains of the highly indebted estate passed to his recently widowed, eldest daughter, Lady Hood. About the time that the estate reached Lady Hood she had re-married (1817) to James Stewart and the Isle of Lewis had become a serious financial liability rather than the asset it should have been.<sup>108</sup>

The Isle of Lewis was a place where the relationship between landlord and tenant, as well as agricultural practices and culture, had been entrenched since ancient times. The predominant form of land use and occupation was the crofter system. Crofters paid an annual rent to the landlord for a set area of land, which was often shared with other crofter families who shared the tasks of farming, gathering peat for fires or manning a fishing boat. The rent was set arbitrarily by the landlord for his own benefit and was such that it enabled the crofter to sustain only the most basic of livelihoods.<sup>109</sup>

The big problem for the crofters of Lewis was that their children were reluctant to leave the island; and while the population grew the area of land shared amongst families did not. This shrinking of land-based resources was, to a degree, solved by exploiting the abundant resources of the sea. Initially this meant by fishing but by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century it also meant “kelping”. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the population density on Lewis was about 40 persons per square mile (almost double that of the mainland), with the average family having to support itself on only an acre or

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<sup>107</sup> P. Wilson ‘Curse or Coincidence’ *The North American Review* Vol. 230 No.1, 1930 pp.87-92.

<sup>108</sup> The Mackenzie clan, through its chief, had held the Seaforth estate, which included the island of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, for over 200 years, though it was an ownership that was tenuous, linked as it was to the clan’s fortunes, which waxed and waned depending on the outcomes of its alliances with the various contestants for the Scottish or English Crown. For example Lord Seaforth backed the Jacobites against King Charles II and when that cause was lost his estates were confiscated and he was forced into exile. By the time that Francis Humberston Mackenzie became the Lord Seaforth, in 1782, the estate had been lost and regained at least three times. P. Symes ‘James Alexander Stewart Mackenzie: Portrait of a private note issuer’ *International Bank Note Society Journal*, Volume 37, No.1, 1998

<sup>109</sup> W. Hance ‘Crofting Settlements and Housing in the Outer Hebrides’ *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* Vol. 41, no.1 1951 pp. 75-85



two of land.<sup>110</sup> This combination of overpopulation and overexploitation of the island's resources meant that more and more of those resources were used simply to maintain the growing population rather than generating cash flows into the economy.

Crofters lived in small, essentially self-sufficient hamlets. The surrounding land was usually divided between families but "ownership" of each sub-division was generally rotated annually so that no crofter family exclusively owned land which was better or worse than any other member of the group. Agricultural practices were primitive, for example, wooden ploughs drawn by a team of four or five horses were still used in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>111</sup> If agriculture was primitive in the Outer Hebrides so were the conditions in which the crofters lived. In the freezing, wet winters, they shared their dwellings ('black-houses') with their livestock. Constructed with a thick, low stone wall and a tall thatched roof, the black-houses were long and low and without windows or a chimney (smoke from the peat fires used for warmth and cooking seeped slowly out through the straw thatching of the roof). During the Napoleonic Wars, the Isle of Lewis had generated considerable income for Lord Seaforth's estate from sales of fish and kelp ash but the crofters saw little of this cash, forcing them to rely on agricultural and resource management practices that had not changed significantly in hundreds of years.<sup>112</sup>

Kelp, which was washed up onto the shores of Lewis in huge quantities, had started to become an important source of income for Lord Seaforth from the mid-1780s. In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century kelp ash, which was used in the rapidly growing industries of glass and soap manufacture, was fetching about £2 per ton. During the American Revolution it reached £10 per ton and peaked at £20 per ton in 1810.<sup>113</sup> Lewis produced around 900 tons of kelp ash per annum for the Seaforth Estate so in 1810 kelp production alone would have been generating around £14,000 gross profit per annum for Lord Seaforth.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> W. Hance 'Crofting Settlements and Housing in the Outer Hebrides' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* Vol. 41, no.1 1951 pp. 75-85

<sup>111</sup> D. Watson *Caledonia Australis* (Sydney) 1984 pp. 25-34

<sup>112</sup> M Gray 'The Kelp Industry in the Highlands and Islands' *The Economic History Review* Vol. 4 No.2 (1951) pp. 200-204

<sup>113</sup> M Gray 'The Kelp Industry in the Highlands and Islands' *The Economic History Review* Vol. 4 No.2 (1951) pp.198-199

<sup>114</sup> *ibid*

The kelp was gathered by crofters in the storm season when kelp was washed onto the beaches. On Lewis (as was the case in most of the islands and western Highland coastlines) the kelp was owned by the landlord, who paid the crofters a set rate per ton for gathering the kelp and then reducing it to ash in crude ovens known as kelp kilns. The resulting product was then sold by Seaforth around Britain, mostly to soap factories. As the price of kelp ash rose, the rate paid to the crofters remained the same, boosting profits to the point where they often exceeded the entire rental income of most Highland estates with west coast frontage.<sup>115</sup> In the case of Lewis, it appears that the late Lord Seaforth had come to believe that the kelp income would never cease, for his needs became ever more extravagant, forcing him to borrow money against future income and mortgage his various holdings to fund his eccentric and excessive lifestyle. On his death in 1815 the Seaforth Estate was in a rare state of neglect.<sup>116</sup>

It was about this same time that Peter Degraives' fishing enterprise failed leaving the thrice failed entrepreneur to eke out a living by coastal trading. When, toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century's second decade, he saw the Seaforth estates pass to Lord Seaforth's daughter he also saw a chance for both profit and social advancement.<sup>117</sup> He set about trying to convince the new owner of Lewis, and her husband, that he could make the island a profitable part of their estates through a number of innovative development projects.<sup>118</sup>

Degraives offered the new Laird and Lady a package of interesting, and genuinely advanced, ideas. These included building a factory which, he claimed, would be able to produce the industrial alkali, sodium carbonate, from salt rather than from kelp; constructing a reticulated town water supply for Stornaway; and making wholesale changes to the unhygienic black houses and inefficient farming practices of the Lewis Islanders.<sup>119</sup> (Degraives' designed a more suitable and hygienic form of housing for

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<sup>115</sup> M Gray The Kelp Industry in the Highlands and Islands *The Economic History Review* Vol. 4 No.2 (1951) p. 203

<sup>116</sup> S. Nenadig 'The Impact of the Military Profession on Highland Gentry Families 1730-1830' *The Scottish Historical Review* Vol. 85 No. 219 (April 2006) pp. 77-96

<sup>117</sup> C. Mackie 'Traditional Housing on the Isle of Lewis' *Bealoideas* No. 74 2006 p.77

<sup>118</sup> The Seaforth Muniments *Letters of P. Degraives, 1819*. National Archives of Scotland GD46/17/51

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*

both humans and livestock to eliminate the blackhouses as places for human residence, it was a valid plan that was ultimately not put into practice until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>120)</sup>

It seems that the new Mrs Stewart-Mackenzie and her husband initially entertained some interest in Degraives' plans and might have supported them had it not been that the estate was in such dire financial straits after the downturn in meat and fish prices and the continuing downward slide in the price of kelp ash. These factors, combined with the debts that the last Lord Seaforth had tied to the Estate on his death, severely reduced their available income.<sup>121</sup>

Interestingly it is likely that, had the Stewart-Mackenzies supported Degraives' scheme to establish a factory to convert salt to sodium carbonate, the fortunes of both may have been very different. For it is from Degraives' correspondence with James Stewart-Mackenzie that we have the first clear proof of Degraives' technical brilliance and his awareness of the latest scientific developments on the Continent. In a letter to Stewart-Mackenzie dated January 15<sup>th</sup> 1819 Degraives pointed out that the price of kelp ash was greatly over-inflated by the duty the British government placed on rock salt and would drop dramatically once that duty was removed. He went on to suggest that he could build a factory that could produce an industrial alkali from salt that was cheaper and at least three times more pure than the alkali made from kelp. Degraives' prediction soon came true. Only four years later, after being progressively lowered, salt duties were dropped entirely and kelp prices tumbled to settle at around £3 per ton—approximately the cost of producing the kelp ash in the first place. Kelp prices never recovered from this level.<sup>122</sup>

As income from kelp had been central to the fortunes of the Seaforth Estate for more than three decades, the decline in the price devastated the estate and by 1823 Stewart Mackenzie was forced to issue his own one pound notes as a means of remaining solvent. This dire strategy could well have been averted had he invested in the factory

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<sup>120</sup> C. Mackie 'Traditional Housing on the Isle of Lewis' *Bealoideas* No. 74 2006 p.77

<sup>121</sup> P. Symes 'James Alexander Stewart Mackenzie: Portrait of a private note issuer' *International Bank Note Society Journal*, Volume 37, No.1, 1998

<sup>122</sup> M Gray 'The Kelp Industry in the Highlands and Islands' *The Economic History Review* Vol. 4 No.2 (1951) pp. 198-203

Degraves had suggested. By the mid-1820s those who had invested in similar ventures elsewhere in Britain were making huge profits supplying the rapidly expanding soap and glass industries.<sup>123</sup>

Why the Stewart-Mackenzies chose not to support Degraves' plan of bringing reticulated water to every house in Stornaway is not clear for Degraves indicated that he had the means to finance this venture himself. In his letters to Stewart-Mackenzie Degraves explained that he would recoup his costs through an annual charge to each household of between 25 and 30 shillings. As Degraves' plan involved laying a considerable amount of pipe from a lake in the hills above Stornaway as well as other major capital works, the combined cost of which would have been considerable, it can only be assumed that he had access to a substantial source of finance.<sup>124</sup>

After at least one meeting and extensive correspondence with the Stewart-Mackenzies it must have become clear to Degraves that he would not receive the level of support he needed to carry out his grand designs so he reverted to what appears to have been his "Plan B". This involved moving himself and his rapidly growing family to somewhere even further from the scenes of his failures where there were opportunities for starting up yet another ambitious project whilst enabling him to once more reinvent himself.<sup>125</sup> Whilst the USA and Canada were amongst the options available to Degraves and other emigrants it is clear that Degraves decided that there was one place on Earth that was further away from Britain than anywhere else, but which still offered the benefits of British civilisation— Van Diemen's Land.<sup>126</sup> The Australian colonies had also developed a reputation as a place where there would be opportunities for fast profits for an enterprising, smooth-talking entrepreneur like Degraves.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> T Dickinson and D Hardie 'The Origins of the Synthetic Alkali Industry in Britain' *Economica* Vol.23 No. 90 (May 1956) p.169

<sup>124</sup> The Seaforth Muniments *Letters of P. Degraves, 1819*. National Archives of Scotland GD46/17/51

<sup>125</sup> R. Grant *Representations of British Emigration, Colonisation and Settlement* (New York) 2005 pp. 130-134

<sup>126</sup> M. Prentis *The Scots in Australia* (Sydney) 1983 pp. 28-33; K. McKenzie *A Swindler's Progress* (Sydney) 2010 pp. 181-182; D. Watson *Caledonia Australis* (Sydney) 1984 pp. 46-50

<sup>127</sup> B. Palmer '19<sup>th</sup> Century Canada and Australia: The Paradoxes of Class Formation' *Labour History* No.71 (Nov. 1996) pp. 16-21

In the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the economic decline in the Scottish Highlands and the industrialisation of the Lowlands, many Scotsmen were seeking to improve their fortunes in the Australian colonies and it is certain that Degraives would have heard numerous tales of the opportunities offered by this expanding new world—including grants of vast tracts of land and access to cheap labour, in the form of convicts, for men of capital.<sup>128</sup> It was to there that Degraives now planned to move himself and his family and so it was that sometime in 1820 Degraives and his brother-in-law Hugh Macintosh purchased the Bristol-built ship *Hope* from the Bristol-based shipping group Hooper & Co for the bargain price of £850. However, with creditors again on his trail, Degraives embarked on a series of manoeuvres designed to obscure the nature of his activities and confuse his creditors. Part of these manoeuvres involved hiding the ownership and origins of the *Hope*. Although it is possible that Degraives owned half of the *Hope*, as is generally claimed, her only registered owner was Hugh Macintosh.<sup>129</sup> Degraives' tactics were so thorough that they are still affecting historians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for most modern maritime histories indicate that the *Hope* was built in Venice and purchased from a London shipowner named Mr Duke.<sup>130</sup>

The issue of how the relatively impoverished Degraives managed to acquire the milling machinery and other equipment he intended to take to Van Diemen's Land on board the *Hope* is, like the ownership of the vessel itself, a tangled affair which will be dealt with in more detail in a following chapter. Suffice to say now that, based on his past tactics and those revealed in letters from various of the *Hope*'s passengers in 1821, it would be safe to say that Degraives would do whatever it took to achieve his goals. As all the evidence indicates that ready cash was a serious problem for Degraives, it is clear he secured machinery and other equipment either on credit or by making a part payment on their delivery with the promise (which he had no intention of honouring) that the balance would be settled at some future date.<sup>131</sup> However, even with all his manoeuvrings, creditors continued harassing Degraives for payment of outstanding debts, right up to the moment that the *Hope* left England's shores, and would continue to do so for years to come.

<sup>128</sup> D. MacMillan *Scotland and Australia 1788 to 1850* (Oxford) 1967 pp. 85-121

<sup>129</sup> Lloyds Shipping Registers: 1821 to 1827

<sup>130</sup> R. Parsons *Shipping Losses and Casualties in Australia and New Zealand* (Adelaide) 2003 p.37

<sup>131</sup> Utas Archives M10/4/11

## Section Two: Captain Hugh Macintosh: the Honourable Mutineer

### Chapter Five: The Company Cadet

When he died in Hobart at the end of 1834 Hugh Macintosh was the co-owner of the Cascades industrial complex which included saw mills, flour mills and a brewery; an enterprise he began with his brother-in-law, Peter Degraives, in 1824. Macintosh was also the sole registered owner of the *Hope* from 1821 to 1826. Without the monetary and moral support of Macintosh, neither the *Hope* nor Degraives would ever have made it to Hobart Town nor would the Cascades brewing empire ever have come into existence. Yet, despite the importance of Macintosh's contribution to the foundation of Cascades, little has been written about him. Even his obituary published in the *Hobart Courier* on 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1835 was brief.

Died at the Cascades on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December 1834, Major Hugh Macintosh, formerly of H.E.I. Company's Service, and more latterly attached to the Persian Embassy, aged 58.

Despite the brevity of his obituary Macintosh led a life that was even more rich and varied than that of his more renowned business partner, Peter Degraives.

Like Degraives, very little is known about Hugh Macintosh's early life other than that he was probably born in or near Inverness in late 1776 and that his father was probably Charles Macintosh and his mother Isobel Ross.<sup>1</sup> He had at least one sibling, a sister named Sophia Macintosh who would later become Mrs Peter Degraives. The seat of the Macintosh Clan lay in the lands around Inverness where Charles Macintosh owned agricultural property and his extended family had some significant influence, being engaged in a wide range of business. David MacMillan suggests that Hugh Macintosh came from "an influential Inverness family" though he supplies no other information.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Inverness Parish Records* 1776 p.579

<sup>2</sup> David S MacMillan, *Scotland and Australia 1788-1850*. (Oxford) 1967. p85

It is known that the young Hugh Macintosh attended the exclusive Harrow School, a short distance north of London, from some time after 1780 through to 1790 where he was given a classical education designed to prepare “young gentlemen” for the upper echelons of society.<sup>3</sup> During these years Macintosh became fluent in Latin and probably Greek, which, in his later life he taught to his sister Sophia’s children in Hobart.<sup>4</sup> His talent with Latin also appears to have given Macintosh a love of languages which he used throughout his adult life, developing a reputation for fluency in a number of Asian languages, including Persian.<sup>5</sup> During his time at Harrow Macintosh made a number of lifelong friends, one of whom in particular, Henry Ellis, was to play a pivotal role in his future fortunes.<sup>6</sup> Henry Ellis (later Sir Henry) was the acknowledged illegitimate son of the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Buckinghamshire, Lord Hobart, born when the Earl was only seventeen.<sup>7</sup> Whilst unable to inherit the title or fortunes of his father because of his birth outside of marriage, Ellis grew up on his father’s estates and rose to high levels in English society.<sup>8</sup> Blessed with great intelligence and, like his friend Macintosh, a gift for languages, Ellis led an extraordinarily interesting life which included the two stints as British Ambassador to Persia as well as an appointment as Secretary to Britain’s 1816 Embassy to China.<sup>9</sup>

On the basis of Macintosh’s attendance at Harrow it can be said that his immediate family were, if not wealthy, well off enough to be able to send their son to such a prestigious school. They also had the necessary high social standing needed to gain Hugh’s entry to Harrow and then, in 1790, to secure him the position of a cadet officer in the Honourable East India Company’s Madras army.<sup>10</sup>

An appointment as an east India Company cadet required an interview with, and the direct patronage of, one of the Directors of the East India Company.<sup>11</sup> As there were

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<sup>3</sup> C. Tyerman *A History of Harrow School 1324-1991* (Oxford) 1990 p.99

<sup>4</sup> E. Markham *Voyage to Van Dieman’s Land* (London) 1834 p.15

<sup>5</sup> *Memorial of Hugh Macintosh to Lt. Governor Arthur* CSO1/281/6767; 1828 p.1

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>7</sup> W. Jones *Prosperity Robinson, the life of Viscount Goderich* (New York) 1967 p.49

<sup>8</sup> W. Carpenter *Peerage for the People* (London) 1841 p.98

<sup>9</sup> *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, Vol. 16, 1856: S. Mahdavi ‘Doctors, Diplomats and Missionaries in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Iran’ *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 32 No. 2 (Nov. 2005) p. 173

<sup>10</sup> Tyerman states that at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Harrow was considered the second most popular and exclusive public school in Britain and as such was very selective about who was accepted as a student (Eton was the most exclusive).

<sup>11</sup> A. Lambton ‘Major General Sir John Malcolm’ *Iran* Vol. 33 1995 p.98

only 24 such directors, this not only required social connections but a substantial payment, which, for a military cadetship, was expected to be around £500.<sup>12</sup> In the early 1790s these commissions were becoming very valuable because of the opportunities Company officers had for making money on the side through various business deals and quasi legal taxes.<sup>13</sup> From around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the sons of genteel families who were intent on a military career had the choice of joining His Majesty's Army or the East India Company's army.<sup>14</sup> Their choice was often influenced by the financial status of the family for whilst being an officer in the Company's Army did not carry the social prestige or status of a similar rank in H.M. Army, the opportunity to amass significant wealth through "extracurricular" activities were considerable.<sup>15</sup> This opportunity to make one's fortune as a Company army officer in India tended to attract a specific type of person sometimes described as the "genteel poor" or "marginal middle class" who were often described with scorn by those of independent means.<sup>16</sup> The Duke of York, in a letter to Indian Governor General, Lord Cornwallis, described the East India Company's officers thus:

"The Officers are, in general, young men who have ruined themselves and are obliged to fly their Country, or very low people who are sent (to India) to make their fortunes, and who will therefore stick at nothing to gain money."<sup>17</sup>

However such harsh criticism of the Company's officers was generally undeserved as they were, for the most part, well-educated young gentlemen whose only fault was that they either were not "first born sons" or their were their families did not possess the fortunes of Britain's landed gentry or upper classes. In both these cases their families saw a cadetship in the East India Company as a sound investment in their

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<sup>12</sup> C.H. Philips *The East India Company 1784-1834* (London) 1940 p. 15

<sup>13</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1926 p.3

<sup>14</sup> Through the period of Macintosh's life the terms Royal Army, King's Army or, more often, H.M. Army are used to distinguish between the Honourable East India Company's army and what would now be called the "regular" army. For consistency's sake I will use the term H.M. (His Majesty's) Army.

<sup>15</sup> D. Peers Between Mars and Mammon: the east India Company and Efforts to Reform Its Army. *The Historical Journal* Vol. 33 No. 2, 1990. p.386

<sup>16</sup> P. Marshall British Society in India under the East India Company *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 31 No.1 Feb. 1997 pp. 97-99

<sup>17</sup> Letter H.R.H. Duke of York to Lord Cornwallis 26<sup>th</sup> July 1788; in E. Thompson *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* (London) 1962 p.175



son's and, often, family's future. Indeed many Company officers rose to great wealth and respectability.<sup>18</sup> The Duke of Wellington later wrote of them that:

—.. the desire to accumulate wealth and return to Europe is natural and praiseworthy in an officer of the local army in India.”<sup>19</sup>

And whilst the Duke of York and the officers of H.M. Army may have looked on the financial dealings of Company officers with disdain, it should be remembered that it was the expectation of profit that motivated all those involved with the East India Company's activities, particularly its shareholders. It is an interesting side note in this context that whilst 21 percent of officers in H.M. Army came from aristocratic families, in the Company's Army this figure was only 4 percent.<sup>20</sup>

Apart from these financial issues it is reasonable to say that the often considerable tensions generated between the officers of the Royal and Company armies were more a reflection of the different requirements imposed on them in the performance of their professional duties than any difference in the quality of the men themselves.<sup>21</sup> Yet it was this reliance on their wages and allowances that ultimately separated the Company's officers from the young gentlemen who became officers in H.M. Army; it was also a factor that was to profoundly shape Hugh Macintosh's life.

One fundamental difference between the two armies was that in H.M. Army young officers could progress upward through the ranks on the basis of whether or not they or their parents could afford to purchase a promotion when one became available, whereas in the Company's army one had to rely on connections, merit and the death or promotion of a superior officer.<sup>22</sup> Another feature of officers in the H.M. Army was that it was often the case that the wages they received were largely irrelevant when compared to the family monies to which they had access. This financial independence

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<sup>18</sup> A. Lambton \_Major General Sir John Malcolm' *Iran* Vol. 33 1995 p.97

<sup>19</sup> Wellington to Melville, 13 March 1812, in J.H.Stocqueler, *The Wellington Manual* (Calcutta) 1840 p.5

<sup>20</sup> D. Peers \_Between Mars and Mammon: the East India Company and Efforts to Reform Its Army' *The Historical Journal* Vol. 33 No. 2, 1990. p.390

<sup>21</sup> L. Crowell \_Military professionalism in the Colonial Context: the Madras Army' *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 24 (May 1990) p.253

<sup>22</sup> L. Crowell \_Military professionalism in the Colonial Context: the Madras Army' *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 24 (May 1990) p.255

allowed His Majesty's officers to focus their attentions on abstract martial ideals such as honour, courage and attaining prestige amongst their peers, rather than being constantly on the lookout for monetary advantage.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand Company officers, who also professed to hold to the same martial ideals as their Royal Army counterparts, often found that their actions and energies came to be focused on more pragmatic issues, such as acquiring their fortunes and ensuring their entitlements, in a way which might potentially compromise their martial ideals; in fact, most of the problems that the Company had with its army revolved around exactly these issues.<sup>24</sup>

When Hugh Macintosh joined the Honourable East India Company's Army as a cadet officer in 1790, aged 14, it was at a time when the Company's relationship with its Indian army was going through a process of significant change that would ultimately result in the Company wielding a more professional and powerful force.<sup>25</sup> Part of this process was a decision to improve the training of its officers which resulted in the establishment of a dedicated cadet academy in England in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, however this occurred after Macintosh's time so it is most likely that young Macintosh completed his cadetship at the military academy at Deptford where both Company and H.M. Army cadet officers were trained to meet the increasing demand for European officers in India.<sup>26</sup>

For the first part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the East India Company's army was relatively small and was manned predominantly by British and European troops. However, in 1756 Robert Clive convincingly demonstrated the value of a well-trained native army when, with just 800 troops (300 Europeans and 500 native troops, known as sepoys), he seized the fortified city of Arcot and then defended it against a combined enemy force of over 10,000 French and Indian troops.<sup>27</sup> In the years following the battle at Arcot the Company embarked on an extensive program of training native soldiers for service in what became known as the Native Infantry. Although the sepoys were

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<sup>23</sup> D. Peers 'Between Mars and Mammon: the East India Company and Efforts to Reform Its Army' *The Historical Journal* Vol. 33 No. 2, 1990. pp. 380-382

<sup>24</sup> D. Peers 'Between Mars and Mammon: the East India Company and Efforts to Reform Its Army' *The Historical Journal* Vol. 33 No. 2, 1990. p. 381

<sup>25</sup> A. Gilbert 'Recruitment and Reform in the East India Company Army 1760-1800' *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 15 No.1 1975 pp.89-111

<sup>26</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 p.11

<sup>27</sup> E. Thompson & G. Garratt *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* (London) 1962 pp. 75-76

generally considered to be superior to soldiers of European origin because of their familiarity with the climate and living conditions, they were paid less and always kept under the command of European officers.<sup>28</sup>

When Macintosh took up his cadetship the East India Company's Indian army was essentially two armies within one. There were regiments made up mostly of British-born soldiers, referred to as the European army, and there were regiments made up of native Indians, known as the Native Infantry. Within the Native Infantry there was no opportunity for Indians, regardless of their abilities, to rise above the level of sergeant, whilst in the European army talented individuals could rise up through the ranks to the highest positions.<sup>29</sup> This essentially racist Company policy also excluded from the possibility of attaining officer rank all persons of mixed race (Anglo-Indian parentage) regardless of the social status of the parents.<sup>30</sup> The European regiments had been originally supposed to ensure that there was a loyal British core to the Company's military presence in India, as well as being expected to set an example of "Britishness" for the native forces. However as the 18<sup>th</sup> century progressed it became increasingly difficult for the Company to attract suitable British men as troops for its Indian Army. As the British portion of their forces decreased the Company's directors, as well as its officers in India, became extremely concerned about the numerical imbalance and, over the years, attempted a series of strategies to reverse the chronic shortage of European personnel.

This recruit problem was primarily due to the series of wars in which Britain was involved during the latter portion of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, most notably the Seven Year War and the American Revolution. Because H.M. Army was pressed for troops during this extended period of war, the East India Company was seen by it as a competitor. This resulted in the East India Company being prohibited from recruiting new troops "by the beat of the drum".<sup>31</sup> As their army became increasingly short of

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<sup>28</sup> E. Thompson & G. Garratt *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* (London) 1962 p.175. R. Cooper "Culture, Combat and Colonialism in 18<sup>th</sup> Century India" *International History Review* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Sept. 2005) p.545

<sup>29</sup> D. Peers "Between Mars and Mammon: the east India Company and Efforts to Reform Its Army" *The Historical Journal* Vol. 33 No. 2, 1990. p.386

<sup>30</sup> M Fisher "Excluding and Including Native of India: early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Race Relations in Britain." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* Vol. 27 No. 2 2007 p.108

<sup>31</sup> Recruiting "by the beat of the drum" refers to the practice of sending out a Captain and/or a sergeant with the regiment's colours, pipers and drummers to visit country towns and villages where, after a

British soldiers, and with no other obvious options, the Company directors decided to resort to the practice of “crimping”, by which a professional crimper was paid a bounty for each man delivered to the Company’s premises by whatever means.<sup>32</sup> Crimping resulted in a range of abuses from gross misrepresentation of the pay and conditions in the Company’s army to outright kidnapping, whilst a “per head” bounty led to the crimps being completely indiscriminate in whom they “enlisted”. The easiest pickings were the “riff raff” of London’s back streets and even prisoners in jail for minor offences.<sup>33</sup> In 1787 India’s Governor General Lord Cornwallis expressed his low opinion of the European troops arriving at the Indian garrisons in a letter to the Duke of York. As he put it “...the contemptible trash of which the Company’s European force is composed makes me shudder.”<sup>34</sup>

Once the crimps had got their men they were placed in Company lock-ups near the docks where they were held until their ship was ready to sail.<sup>35</sup> Yet even when the Company had acquired a sufficient number of British troops to send on to India, that manpower was further reduced by the terrible conditions encountered on the long passage, often lasting six months. Deaths and extreme illness due to scurvy and other shipboard maladies were such that even those that survived the voyage were often incapable of taking up their duties as soldiers.<sup>36</sup>

By the mid 1780s growing public opposition to the East India Company’s recruitment methods, and the realisation by its directors that their recruitment practices were ultimately deterring suitable men from considering a serious career in the Indian Army, encouraged a process of reform. A series of changes were made between 1786 and 1796, which included the requirement by the Company that the British government change legislation to allow the Company to gather recruits “by the beat of

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crowd had been gathered by the pipes and drums, the captain or sergeant would address the crowd with glowing descriptions of the benefits of Army life. As well as a regular salary, excitement and glory potential recruits were offered a monetary bounty “the King’s shilling” when they signed up.

<sup>32</sup> A. Gilbert Recruitment and Reform in the East India Company Army 1760-1800 *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 15 No.1 1975 p.93-94

<sup>33</sup> Letter H.R.H. Duke of York to Lord Cornwallis 26<sup>th</sup> July 1788 in E. Thompson *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* (London)1962 p.175

<sup>34</sup> Letter from Lord Cornwallis to H.R.H. Duke of York 12<sup>th</sup> August 1787 in E. Thompson *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* (London)1962 pp. 174-175

<sup>35</sup> A. Gilbert Recruitment and Reform in the East India Company Army 1760-1800 *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 15 No.1 1975 pp.91-95

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

the drum". This eliminated the need for crimpers and increased both the number and quality of recruits.<sup>37</sup> Another change was to increase the numbers of Native Infantry, which in turn required a larger body of professionally trained British officers to ensure that the native regiments were ~~properly~~" commanded. This also combined with a general trend for increasingly intensive cadet training programs in most of Europe's armies.<sup>38</sup> It was into this system of professional officer training that Hugh Macintosh entered at Deptford. (Previous to this period cadet officer training had involved an informal type of apprenticeship between young men and existing officers where it was assumed that by simply drawing officers from the ranks of ~~gentlemen's~~ sons" that their social rank and ~~breeding~~" would naturally and automatically give them the necessary qualities required in an officer.)

Macintosh completed his cadetship, which also included lessons in the Persian and Hindu languages, in August 1791 and was promoted to the junior rank of second lieutenant.<sup>39</sup> He had just turned sixteen when he sailed on a Company ship to Madras, where Lord Hobart, the father of his school friend Henry Ellis, was soon to take up the governorship.<sup>40</sup>

Leaving England, the 15 year old Macintosh would have stood on the deck of the East Indiaman wrestling with his feelings as he waved farewell to his parents and his little sister Sophia (who would have been less than five years old).<sup>41</sup> He knew that if he ever saw any of them again it would not be for at least a decade, which was the minimum time of service before an officer was granted leave.<sup>42</sup> He would also have known that there was a reasonable chance he would be dead before that time or that, if he did eventually return to Britain, it might be as an invalid, disabled by injury or disease. Approximately ten percent of the Company's European troops died every year, though the main cause of death amongst the soldiery was not war wounds, but

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<sup>37</sup> A. Gilbert 'Recruitment and Reform in the East India Company Army 1760-1800' *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 15 No.1 1975 pp.91-95

<sup>38</sup> Kaushik Roy 'Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849' *The Journal of Military History* Vol. 69. No. 3 (July, 2005) p. 653

<sup>39</sup> Crowell L. 'Military professionalism in the Colonial Context: the Madras Army' *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 24 (May 1990) pp.264-266 and *The Madras Military Fund* British Library L.AG.23.10.1

<sup>40</sup> Lord Hobart was Governor of Madras from 1794 to 1798.

<sup>41</sup> Whilst there are no known records of Macintosh's first journey to India the published memoirs of Captain John Blakiston, a fellow Company army cadet officer, who made the voyage from England to Madras a decade after Macintosh, give a good indication of what the voyage involved.

<sup>42</sup> A. Lambton 'Major General Sir John Malcolm' *Iran* Vol. 33 1995 p.98

venereal diseases.<sup>43</sup> Struggling with homesickness young Macintosh would also have had to deal with the “...horrors of seasickness” which, as another young cadet wrote, “... is of itself enough to make a man wish he were at the bottom of the deep sea.”<sup>44</sup>

But these were all issues that every man, woman or child, officer, soldier or convict leaving Britain for any distant land would have had to endure. However, unlike the soldiery, as an officer and the son of a gentleman aboard an East Indiaman the young Hugh Macintosh would have travelled in relative comfort in his own cabin (or perhaps shared one with another cadet) and dined at the Captain’s table with reasonable regularity. As the voyage to Madras took between five and six months, Macintosh would have formed his first batch of new relationships aboard the ship. Captain Charles Blakiston, who made the same journey a decade later also as a Company cadet, described the mixture of persons that a young officer might expect to find for company:

The generality of our society on board was respectable, and some of its members were men of great education and talent. Excepting that there was no lady in the party it was composed of the usual materials found around the cuddy-table of an East Indiaman...<sup>45</sup>

These “materials” included a judge, several high ranking officers, junior officers and a number of civilian Company employees, some travelling to India for the first time and some returning to India after taking a year or two’s furlough in Britain. With such a varied company Macintosh would have spent his days playing cards, walking the decks while discussing various topics with his peers and seniors, playing pranks or simply reading. It would be certain that the “old hands” aboard would have given a large amount of attention to preparing the young men for the realities of life in India.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> N. Cherian “Spaces for Races: Ordering of Camp Followers in the Military Cantonments, Madras Presidency, c. 1800-64” *Social Scientist* Vol. 32, No. 5/6 (May –June 2004) p.33

<sup>44</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years’ Military Adventure* (London) 1829 p.18

<sup>45</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years’ Military Adventure* (London) 1829 p.19

<sup>46</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years’ Military Adventure* (London) 1829 pp. 19-23

## Chapter Six: Madras and Mysore

After more than five months at sea, sighting Madras and the palm-studded coastline of south east India must have been a powerful experience for all on board. Once on shore Macintosh was expected to find his own way through Madras to Fort St George, the headquarters of the East India Company's army in Madras. Most likely he would first have, like Blakiston, taken a room in a hotel in town for a night or two to refresh himself and regain his "land legs" before walking to the gates of the fort and then through and over a "succession of outworks and drawbridges and a number of angular walls and deep moats" before eventually reaching the officer to whom he had to present his credentials.<sup>198</sup> No doubt Macintosh would have been struck, like Blakiston, by the observation that, despite the searing heat, the soldiers and officers he met were all in full uniform with their coats buttoned up to their chins.<sup>199</sup> Once the necessary paperwork had been completed Macintosh would have been assigned to the Cadet Company where he would have been drilled with the other newly arrived cadets until the time came when he was assigned to his own regiment to begin his duties as a junior officer in the Company's Madras Army's. Macintosh was placed in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Native Infantry and would stay with that battalion for his entire time in India, almost 20 years.

Behind the city of Madras, to the west, lay the extensive Hindu kingdom of Mysore. Until 1792, the year of Macintosh's arrival, this kingdom had stretched across most of the southern end of India from just outside of Madras on the east coast all the way over to the west coast. Mysore was ruled by a man named Tipu Sultan.

Whilst ostensibly a Hindu kingdom, Mysore had been controlled since the 1760s by Muslim rulers who had usurped the authority of Mysore's Raja, who was, however, retained as a figurehead of the government. This overthrow was initially carried out by Tipu Sultan's father, Hyder Ali, who, though illiterate, was a highly intelligent and skilled political and military tactician.<sup>200</sup> Although Hyder Ali was the son of a general in the service of the King of Mysore it is said that he worked his way up through the

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid

<sup>199</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 p.32

<sup>200</sup> L. Bowering *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* (London) 1893 p.38

ranks of the Raja's army to become the Raja's Prime Minister.<sup>201</sup> Not long after becoming Prime Minister Hyder Ali staged a coupe to depose the King and seized complete power in 1763, after which he devoted most of his time and energy using Mysore's army to expand the size of his realm.<sup>202</sup> He rapidly expanded westward to conquer the small kingdoms and communities of India's south west coast after which he shifted his attentions to the east where he clashed with British interests as he approached Madras.<sup>203</sup> The East India Company was well aware that Hyder Ali both recognised the threat of British intrusion into Mysore and resented the increasing influence of the British in India generally. They also knew that he had vowed to drive them from the sub-continent.<sup>204</sup> To facilitate this ambition Hyder Ali had formed an alliance with the French. Over the following decades a series of fierce engagements were fought between Hyder Ali and the British (or their Indian allies) with significant victories and defeats for both sides.<sup>205</sup> This almost constant warfare resulted in enormous losses in terms of money and personnel for the East India Company.<sup>206</sup>

Hyder Ali died of cancer in December 1782 in the field, mid campaign, during a Monsoon induced interlude in his war against the British in Madras, however, his death brought no relief to the East India Company as he was immediately succeeded by his son, Tipu, who took the title of Sultan of Mysore. In contrast to his father, Tipu Sultan was extremely well educated but although a forward and innovative thinker he was not as skilled in the arts of war or diplomacy.<sup>207</sup> Because Tipu tended to be erratic and because there have been recent attempts to "redeem" or "reassess" him as a freedom fighter against British Imperialism, descriptions of Tipu's character are often

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<sup>201</sup> T. Gabriel *Hindu-Muslim Relations in North Malabar* (New York) 1996 pp. 164-165

<sup>202</sup> T. Gabriel *Hindu-Muslim Relations in North Malabar* (New York) 1996 pp. 165-168

<sup>203</sup> P. Barua 'Military Developments in India 1750-1850' *Journal of Military History*. Vol. 58, No. 4 (Oct. 1994) pp. 600-601

<sup>204</sup> R. Cooper 'Culture, Combat and Colonialism in 18<sup>th</sup> Century India' *International History Review* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Sept. 2005) p. 547

<sup>205</sup> Kaushik Roy 'Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849' *The Journal of Military History* Vol. 69, No. 3 (July, 2005) p.669

<sup>206</sup> L. Bowering *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* (London) 1893 pp. 105-109

<sup>207</sup> L. Bowering *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* (London) 1893 pp. 209-211; Kaushik Roy 'Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849' *The Journal of Military History* Vol. 69, No. 3 (July, 2005) pp. 668-669



contradictory.<sup>208</sup> However there were two things that Tipu held in common with Hyder Ali. One was his absolute power as the ruler of Mysore and the other was his hatred of the British.<sup>209</sup> He continued to ruthlessly prosecute hostilities against British interests and allies around the borders of his kingdom over the next ten years until the British, under Governor General Lord Cornwallis, decided to launch a full scale attack. After some heavy fighting Tipu was eventually defeated in the first siege of his capital city, Seringapatam, in February 1792; these events took place at about the time the young Hugh Macintosh arrived in Madras to take up his post as an officer in the Native Infantry.

When Macintosh arrived in Madras it was toward the end of a problematic period for the Company there; for systemic corruption had combined with the constant threat of war to almost cripple the Company's Madras operations and reduce its revenue flows.<sup>210</sup> The fact that the Company's highest ranking civilian and military officers were more intent on enriching themselves than serving their employer appropriately, severely limited both its military and commercial capacity.<sup>211</sup> The situation in Madras had begun to improve after the arrival of Lord Cornwallis in 1786 and his subsequent defeat of Tipu Sultan.<sup>212</sup> The terms demanded by Cornwallis for Tipu Sultan's surrender required Tipu to give over to the East India Company half of his kingdom plus three million pounds sterling in cash. These terms and the intervention of Cornwallis in Madras affairs so altered the Company's position there that the period immediately after the initial defeat of Tipu Sultan is generally considered to have been of pivotal importance to Britain's eventual supremacy in India.<sup>213</sup> Suddenly the East India Company had gone from controlling a medium-sized, poorly administered city in the South of India to possessing half of Mysore—a kingdom about the same size as England with relatively sized revenue streams. The administration and garrisoning of such a vast territorial asset required a considerable injection of

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<sup>208</sup> T. Gabriel *Hindu-Muslim Relations in North Malabar* (New York) 1996 pp. 168-169; K. Brittlebank 'Sakti and Barakat: The Power of Tipu's Tiger' *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 29 No. 2 (May 1995) p. 257

<sup>209</sup> P. Barua 'Military Developments in India 1750-1850' *Journal of Military History*. Vol. 58, No. 4 (Oct. 1994) pp. 601-602

<sup>210</sup> E. Thompson & G. Garratt *Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India* (London) 1962 pp. 174-187

<sup>211</sup> E. Thompson & G. Garratt *Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India* (London) 1962 pp. 172-187

<sup>212</sup> Ross C. (Ed) *Correspondence of Charles 1<sup>st</sup> Marquis of Cornwallis* (London) 1859

<sup>213</sup> L. Bowering *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* (London) 1893 p. 6

manpower.<sup>214</sup> As a result, as well as military duties, many additional administrative tasks also fell to the Company's army officers.<sup>215</sup>

Meanwhile, across the whole of the sub-continent, the ingress of various European powers into Indian society had resulted in the destabilisation of the traditional Indian territorial boundaries and the associated hierarchies.<sup>216</sup> As well as the British, the Dutch, French, Portuguese and Danes were all represented in various port cities around the Indian coastline.<sup>217</sup> It was, however, the East India Company's interventionist policies in Indian political life that had the most profound effect. These policies were designed to exaggerate and exploit the developing instability to the point where many of the ruling polities could either be toppled directly by the Company or indirectly through the supply of military support to a rival in exchange for favourable trading or other rights when that rival gained power.<sup>218</sup> Such support, called a "subsidiary", always involved the Company insisting that its new ally accept the protection of the Company's Army, which was then garrisoned at strategic places within the new ally's territory. This was actually a sophisticated type of protection racket which effectively created either vassal or tributary states.<sup>219</sup> The Company's allies, whilst nominally acknowledged as the rulers of their domains, were forced to pay for the Company's military protection through the impost of a significant annual fee which was intended to both cover the Company's military expenses and to make it a profit. Thus, after the eventual death of Tipu Sultan the East India Company installed one of the sons of the rightful Raja of Mysore as ruler. The Raja was then required to pay the Company £280,000 annually for the "protection" of the Company's Army.<sup>220</sup> The additional gain from this policy was that the Company's troops were garrisoned at the best fortified locations from which, should the necessity arise, it could enforce any disputes with, or breaches of contract by, its allies. Once again the Company expected the officers of its army to carry out these combined military and administrative duties, which provided the officers with further

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<sup>214</sup> T. Gabriel *Hindu-Muslim Relations in North Malabar* 1996 pp. 239-241; S. Alvari 'The Company Army and Rural Society 1780-1830' *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 27 No. 1 (Feb., 1993) p.149

<sup>215</sup> D. Peers 'Between Mars and Mammon: the east India Company and Efforts to Reform Its Army' *The Historical Journal* Vol. 33 No. 2, 1990, p.389

<sup>216</sup> R. Mukherjee *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company* (Berlin)1958 pp.251-277

<sup>217</sup> R. Mukherjee *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company* (Berlin)1958 p.283

<sup>218</sup> Ibid

<sup>219</sup> R. Mukherjee *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company* (Berlin)1958 pp.273-283

<sup>220</sup> M. Eyre Wilbur *The East India Company* (New York) 1945 pp.337-339

opportunities for pecuniary gain through claims for allowances and various unofficial ~~taxes~~”.<sup>221</sup>

As the demands on the Company’s Madras army expanded after the first defeat of Tipu Sultan it had to significantly increase the troop numbers of both its European and Native armies. However, because the numbers of recruits from Britain were relatively limited the emphasis was placed on building up the Native Infantry. Native troops offered the Company a double advantage, as wages (generally as much as one tenth of the rate paid to European soldiers) and other expenses were lower while the number of potential recruits was much greater.<sup>222</sup> It only required that there be sufficient recruiting and training of British-born officers to command the expanding Native Infantries. Through the early 1790s this shortage of European troops meant that of a combined force of over 70,000 soldiers in the Company’s India army only about 6,000 were Europeans.

When the Native Infantry was originally established each regiment was overseen by only three European officers: a commandant, who was usually a captain, and two subalterns, usually lieutenants. Beneath the European officers there was also a European sergeant. Generally the highest rank a sepoy could have aspired to under Clive’s Native Infantry was that of corporal. However, the structure of the Native Infantry was reorganised with the reforms of 1786 and 1796 which made it possible for Sepoys to rise to the rank of sergeant. The same reforms also saw the Native Infantry divided into regimental structures more in line with those of the H.M. Army, with each regiment consisting of two battalions and the number of officers overseeing the troops of each regiment being brought up to around the same ratio as in the regulars. This meant that each native regiment was usually commanded by a Colonel with the battalions under the control of a captain, a major or a lieutenant colonel, with two or more junior British officers beneath them.<sup>223</sup>

After completing his time in the Cadet Company, Macintosh was posted into the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Madras Native Infantry as the most junior

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<sup>221</sup> P. Marshall British Society in India Under the East India Company *Modern Asian Studies* vol 31 No.1 1997 p.100

<sup>222</sup> S.Hill ‘The Old Sepoy Officer’ *The English Historical Review* Vol. 28 No. 110 (April 1913) p. 263

<sup>223</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1929 p.14

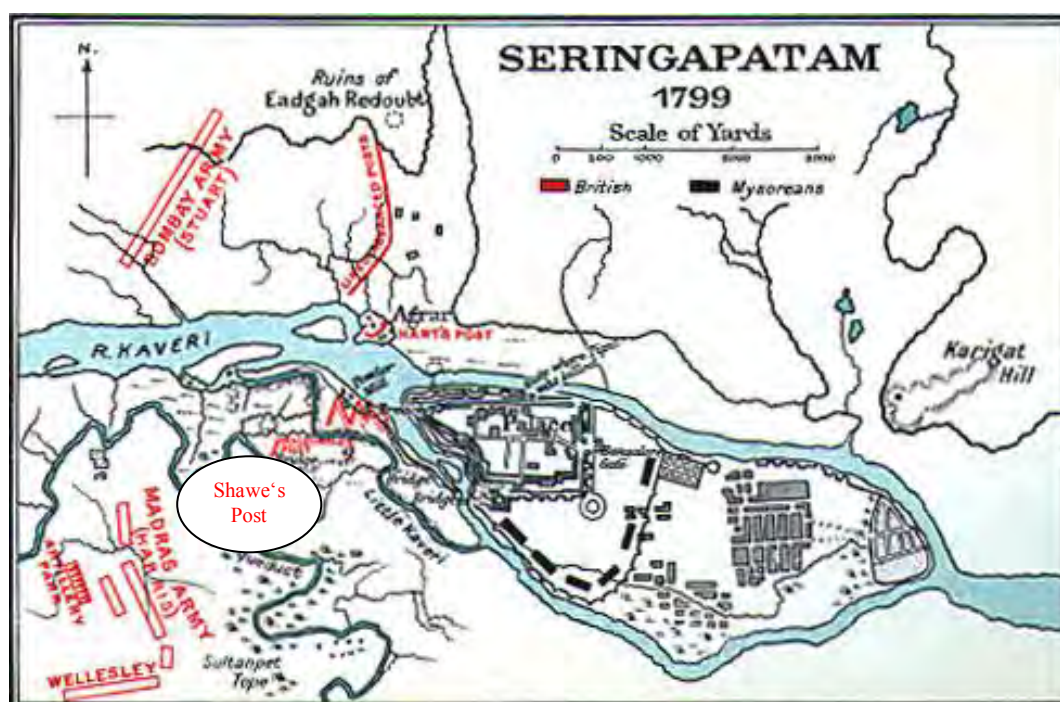
European officer, though even as a 16-year-old he still had complete authority over the most senior native soldier in the battalion of about 500 men.<sup>224</sup> It was a good time for a young officer to take a posting in the Native Infantry. The combination of the expansion of the Company's territories and the numerous minor conflicts that were occurring at this time offered opportunities for rapid promotion so that in February 1794, aged just 18, Macintosh, who must have demonstrated some level of competence in his job, was promoted to a full Lieutenant.<sup>225</sup> However it was not until the beginning of 1799 and the advent of the final, decisive battle between British forces and Tipu Sultan, at Seringapatam, that we gain a clear view of the experiences that were to shape the character of Hugh Macintosh.

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<sup>224</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1929 p.129

<sup>225</sup> E. Dodwell *Alphabetical list of Officers of the Indian Army* (London) 1839 p.114

## Chapter Seven: The Siege of Seringapatam and the Marathas Wars.



Following his defeat in 1792 the Sultan retreated to his capital city, Seringapatam. Built on a rugged granite island in the middle of the Kaveri River Seringapatam was surrounded by water and high stone walls. Behind the high walls deep trenches had been dug into the solid granite bedrock. After his 1792 defeat, as well as rebuilding most of the city's massive walls, Tipu began acquiring arms, particularly cannon, which he purchased both from Europe and also made in his own foundries. Interestingly, he also created a huge arsenal of military rockets and trained troops of "rocketeers" to fire them at enemy targets, usually cavalry.<sup>226</sup>

In 1795 the experienced Lord Cornwallis was replaced as Governor General by a long-serving Company bureaucrat, Sir John Shore, who, though a competent administrator, lacked the military and diplomatic experience of his predecessor.<sup>227</sup> During Shore's term of office (1795-98), Tipu continued his preparations for war unhindered and also made a formal but secret alliance with the French. He also sent emissaries to Persia, Afghanistan, Turkey and other Islamic nations in an attempt to

<sup>226</sup> L. Bowering *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* (London)1893 pp.183-185

<sup>227</sup> E. Thompson & G. Garratt *Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India* (London)1962 p.181

enlist their support in his plans to overthrow the British.<sup>228</sup> In 1798 Shore was replaced by the aristocrat Lord Richard Wellesley (Lord Mornington), supported by his two brothers, Henry and Arthur (later the Duke of Wellington).<sup>229</sup> Immediately he became aware of Tipu's plans to break the 1792 treaty Mornington sent letters by his personal emissary to the Sultan's court but, overestimating the strength of his own position, Tipu treated the emissary with calculated disdain. As Mornington received more and more intelligence of Tipu's designs he decided to settle the matter by military means.<sup>230</sup>

Lord Mornington gathered a massive offensive force, which he described as —. the finest army which ever took the field in India”.<sup>231</sup> His plan called for joining the Company and Royal armies stationed in Bengal and Madras in the east with H.M. Army's forces stationed in Bombay in the North West. The combined force of around 37,000 fighting men (of which about 30,000 would be supplied by the East India Company) was to meet outside the walls of Seringapatam in the Spring of 1799 This time was chosen as it offered a climatic window where temperatures were not oppressive and was prior to the commencement of the monsoons when rainfall would make the movement of a large army almost impossible.<sup>232</sup>

It was with this force that Lieutenant Macintosh's battalion left Madras to take part in the battle that would establish the East India Company as the “power paramount” in India.<sup>233</sup> As Macintosh marched toward Seringapatam from the east, another man who would also later play an important part in Australian history, Major Lachlan Macquarie, marched toward the same destination from the west. Macquarie was part of the Bombay Army and a member of the General's staff. An account of the siege, one by Major Macquarie, and another by Major Alexander Beatson, provide enough information to follow Macintosh's progress through most of the battle.<sup>234</sup> However, unfortunately, as both men were officers in the Royal Army their accounts are highly

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<sup>228</sup> R. Mukherjee *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company* (Berlin) 1958 p.371

<sup>229</sup> E. Thompson & G. Garratt *Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India* (London) 1962 p.199

<sup>230</sup> A. Bennell ‘Wellesley's Settlement of Mysore’ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain* No. 3 / 4 (Oct 1952) pp 124-125.

<sup>231</sup> E. Thompson & G. Garratt *Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India* (London) 1962 p.204

<sup>232</sup> L. Bowering *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* (London) 1893 p.191

<sup>233</sup> E. Thompson & G. Garratt *Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India* (London) 1962 p.206

<sup>234</sup> A transcription of Macquarie's journal is available on line from the Mitchell Library

Anglo-centric and generally tend to ignore the actions of any of Native Infantry forces and their commanders.<sup>235</sup>

The Madras Army reached Seringapatam on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1799 and established a base camp about three kilometres from the city, just beyond the effective range of the many cannon mounted on the city's towering granite walls. Lieutenant General Harris ordered the surrounding countryside made secure. H.M. 12<sup>th</sup> regiment and two battalions of Sepoys—Macintosh's battalion and another from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Native Infantry—under the command of a Colonel Shawe were ordered to attack enemy forces ensconced on some rocky hill tops above the British camp. Macintosh's men advanced but were attacked by enemy forces hiding in a ruined village. After a brief but bloody battle the Company forces secured the village and surrounding countryside. The capture of this strip of territory—known thereafter as Shawe's Post—created a secure front line from which the Army could build its siege batteries and trenches. Shawe's Post was then permanently manned by H.M. 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment and Macintosh's battalion of Native Infantry.<sup>236</sup>

A battery for two 12 pound cannon was built at Shawe's Post that was guarded, in rotation, by the troops who had captured it so Macintosh would have periodically been in command of this post. There were regular attacks on the various batteries by Tipu's forces which resulted in considerable casualties for both sides, although none were ultimately effective in delaying the British works and on 22 April Macintosh's battalion pushed forward to take control of a deep ravine about 600 metres in front of Shawe's Post where another battery for two 12 pounders was built.<sup>237</sup> By this time numerous other batteries had been constructed in a great arc around the hills overlooking Seringapatam while the area between the batteries and the fortress had been completely cleared of enemy forces so that the trenches could be extended right up to the banks of the Kaveri River.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May the British commenced breaching cannon fire on a North West section of Seringapatam's wall, all up twenty nine 18 and 12 pound cannon fired

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<sup>235</sup> R. Cooper *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India* (Cambridge) 2003 p.108

<sup>236</sup> A. Beatson *A View of the Origins and Conduct of the War with Tippoo Sultaun* (London) 1800 p.93

<sup>237</sup> A. Beatson *A View of the Origins and Conduct of the War with Tippoo Sultaun* (London) 1800 p.111

continuously at the wall or at enemy gun emplacements which might be able to direct fire at the troops who would assault the breach. In the first day of this bombardment the artillery officer in command of the cannon fire at Macintosh's advance post, Lieutenant Colonel Montague, climbed up to the top of the wall of the battery to inspect the damage being done to the fortress's wall and was immediately hit by an enemy cannon ball which tore off his arm near the shoulder. Montague died a few days later.



Tipu Sultan firing on British breaching troops from the wall  
(Artist unknown)

Before daybreak of the 4<sup>th</sup> May the troops selected for the assault on breach were stationed in the advance trenches that now terminated near the banks of the river. The storming troops numbered 2,494 Europeans and 1,882 Native Infantry plus their officers, all under the command of Major-General Baird who had specifically asked for the honour of leading the assault on the breach.<sup>238</sup> At precisely 1.30 pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May, exactly one month after the Madras Army had arrived at Seringapatam, General Baird, stepped out of the leading trench at the head of his troops and, waving his sword above his head, he called out:

<sup>238</sup> Baird had been held prisoner for three years in the dungeons of Seringapatam and tortured by Tipu and was only released after Seringapatam was conquered in the first war with Tipu in 1792.



“Come my brave fellows, follow me and prove yourselves worthy of the name of British soldiers!” (An interesting call given about half the troops were Indians!)

With Baird in the lead the troops charged into the Kaveri River where they were exposed to withering cannon and musket fire from the walls. The river had risen as a result of rains the previous night so that its shallow waters were now a deep and deadly current where —. men began to fall fast. All who were wounded inevitably drowned in a second ... as we were plunged into an abyss fathoms deep.”<sup>239</sup> Despite heavy casualties the troops charged on until they reached the relative shelter of the breach. After a short but intense battle the British cleared Tipu’s troops from the ramparts with their musket fire and bayonets after which the fighting moved into the maze of streets and allies of the city. There was sporadic and sometimes fierce resistance in various pockets of the city but the British forces won the battle before the end of the day with the capture of the palace and news that Tipu Sultan had been killed fighting in a fierce fight at one of the city gates.<sup>240</sup>



The Death of Tipu Sultan by Henry Singleton 1800

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<sup>239</sup> Lt. R Bayly (12th Regiment) *Description of the Assault on Seringapatam* Mitchell Library

<sup>240</sup> An excellent first hand description of the storming of the breach at Seringapatam was written by Lieutenant Richard Bayly of His Majesty’s 12th Regiment of Foot. Bayly took part in the attack prior to which he was stationed at Shawe’s Post so would have known Macintosh. Bayly’s description sheds some light onto the intensity of the action and is included in the appendix.

Following the death of Tipu Sultan the East India Company took over all that remained of Tipu's kingdom and reinstated the previous Hindu Wodeyar Dynasty.<sup>241</sup> This was achieved by installing one of the sons of the former Raja of Mysore as its puppet prince so that Mysore effectively became a British dependency.<sup>242</sup>

Macintosh had obviously distinguished himself in this long and difficult engagement for a year later, in August 1800, he was promoted to Captain and given the command of his battalion.<sup>243</sup> It is worth noting here that sometime around the end of 1801 a young second lieutenant by the name of Henry Degraes was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry under the command of Captain Macintosh. There can be no doubt that Henry Degraes and Hugh Macintosh soon became close friends, for about seven years later Henry's brother Peter married Macintosh's sister Sophia.

With Mysore subdued and the Company's position in Madras solid, Governor General Wellesley focused his attention on the last native power that remained to challenge British dominance in India, the Marathas Confederation.<sup>244</sup> In 1803 he launched a sustained campaign against them using the Madras Army under the command of his brother, now General Arthur Wellesley. In the Marathas campaign Wellesley fought two of the fiercest and most challenging battles of his career.<sup>245</sup> Macintosh and his battalion of native infantry were once more to be centrally involved in a series of engagements that would cement Britain as the paramount power of India and put an end to Maratha independence. It is not within the scope of this work to deal with the complex reasons behind this major conflict other than to refer the reader to the work of Randolph Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India*, and to say that the view of Macintosh and the other British officers would have been that the war was an extension of the war between France and Britain, which also began in 1803, and that its purpose was to stop the expansion of any French influence on the sub-continent.<sup>246</sup> Here, once again, the memoirs of Charles Blakiston provide a

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<sup>241</sup> K. Brittlebank 'Tales of Treachery: Rumour as the Source of Claims that Tipu Sultan was Betrayed' *Modern Asian studies* Vol. 37 No. 1 (Feb. 2003) p. 195

<sup>242</sup> R. Mukherjee *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company* (Berlin) 1958 pp.371-373

<sup>243</sup> *The Madras Military Fund* British Library L.AG.23.10.1 p.62

<sup>244</sup> R. Cooper *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India* (Cambridge) 2003 pp. 61-80

<sup>245</sup> R. Cooper 'Wellington and the Marathas in 1803' *The International History Review* Vol. 11, No. 1 (Feb., 1989) p. 31

<sup>246</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 pp.126-127

detailed insight in the activities of Macintosh, for both men were part of the Madras Army throughout this campaign. Blakiston described the progress of the Army through the countryside and all its significant military engagements, most of which included Macintosh, Degraives and their battalion.

Captain Macintosh, Lieutenant Degraives and the other officers and troops of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion left Madras around February 1803 to begin the long trek with the rest of the army (eventually a force of about 10,000 troops) towards the territories of the Marathas, which lay to the north of Mysore. It was a long march but as a Captain in the Company's army Macintosh travelled in relative comfort with his own marquee and servants. The marquee in which Macintosh would have dined with Henry Degraives and his other officers was about 6 metres square with 2 metre high walls and a double fly to keep out the dust and insects. At the end of a day's march, Macintosh would have expected to enter his marquee and find his cot erected and his table set with white linen and polished cutlery ready for the evening meal. This contrasted with the living arrangements of the European troops, who generally slept about 15 men to a tent, and the sepoys who, in the same sized tent, slept about 30 men.<sup>247</sup>

As well as a cook Macintosh would have had a number of other Indian servants such as a butler, a boy to wait at his table and help him dress, another boy to clean his boots, shoes, knives etc, a groom and a grass cutter to provide feed for his horse. His baggage and the supplies for his troops were carried in carts pulled by bullocks.<sup>248</sup> As the commander of his battalion he was also responsible for organising and paying for the supplies required by the battalion as well as acquiring the beasts to bring them.<sup>249</sup>

On the march across the Mysore plateau, the army was joined by troops from the various garrisons scattered across Mysore until the army numbered some 10,000 troops accompanied by an even greater number of servants and camp followers moving in a column across the Mysore plateau. Riding at the head of his battalion as

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<sup>247</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 p.63

<sup>248</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 p.172

<sup>249</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 p.66

the army reached the borders of Mysore Macintosh passed through countryside that had been ravaged by years of war and famine; desolate villages of starving people who sat listlessly waiting to join the recently dead that lay beside them.<sup>250</sup> As the campaign was expected to last at least six month, supplies followed the troops in a vast baggage train pulled by bullocks and camels.

After months of marching and fighting minor actions against small cities and forts, the British Army finally engaged the main Marathas force outside the village of Assaye on 24 September 1803.<sup>251</sup> The Marathas' army was led by a chief by the name of Scindia, who had employed experienced French officers to train his infantry and artillery to a high level of efficiency in European tactics.<sup>252</sup> Both Macintosh and Degraives were to play a central role in the battle that followed which, later, the Duke of Wellington described as one of the most difficult of his career.

The Battle of Assaye took place on a field defined by the river Jouah and the village of Assaye. The British forces came upon their enemy unexpectedly after General Wellesley, acting on inaccurate intelligence, had split his force in two with the idea of entrapping the Marathas, however now the British found themselves facing the Marathas with only half their forces. The Marathas artillery, comprised of more than one hundred cannon, was positioned on a ridge overlooking the river and the flat ground above its banks. General Wellesley ordered four battalions of the Madras Native Infantry, flanked on both sides by Scottish Regiments, to charge directly at the enemy cannon. One of those battalions was the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Native Infantry, led by Captain Macintosh.<sup>253</sup> Under heavy fire from the Marathas' guns on the ridge, Macintosh and Degraives led their battalion across the river to run over a clear field straight at the line of cannon. This scene was described graphically by Blakiston, who witnessed the action from the safe side of the river.

At this time the fire from the enemy's artillery became, indeed, most dreadful. In the space of less than a mile, 100 guns, worked with skill and rapidity, vomited forth death into our feeble ranks. It cannot, then, be a matter of surprise if, in many cases, the sepoy should have taken

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<sup>250</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 pp.145-146

<sup>251</sup> G.S.Sardesai *New History of the Marathas Vol. 3* (Bombay) 1948 pp. 410-411

<sup>252</sup> R. Cooper 'Wellington and the Marathas in 1803' *The International History Review* Vol. 11, No. 1 (Feb., 1989) pp. 31-34

<sup>253</sup> R. Cooper *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India* (Cambridge) 2003 pp. 108-109

advantage of any irregularities in the ground to shelter themselves from the deadly shower, or even if, in some few instances, not all the endeavours of the officers could persuade them to move forward.<sup>254</sup>

Macintosh and his men were pinned down, he was trying to move his troops forward while watching them being torn to pieces by cannonball and grapeshot. Meanwhile General Wellesley brought the European troops in from the flanks to attack the line of cannon with musket and bayonet. As the European troops closed in on the Marathas' flanks, Macintosh, Degraives and their fellow officers managed to organise their troops to fire a full volley at the enemy line then storm the centre of the enemy artillery with a bayonet charge.<sup>255</sup> The charge was met head on by the Marathas infantry emerging from their position behind the artillery, and the battle quickly descended into a melee of British sword and bayonet against the Marathas' slashing broad-bladed spear and half pike.<sup>256</sup> The Marathas fought with great courage, as Major Thorn described:

—.. their infantry stood till the English bayonets touched their breasts; the artillery men, with similar firmness, served their guns without receding an inch; and when they could no longer fire they used their tollwars, till they fell under the carriage wheels of their cannon; while the cavalry, in the same spirit, charged up to the very muzzles of our firelocks.”<sup>257</sup>

The battle ebbed and flowed all day until the Marathas finally broke and fled, leaving their dead and wounded in the field.<sup>258</sup> The wounded Marathas soon joined the dead, however; as Wellesley's troops walked around the battlefield and bayoneted them where they lay. The number of Marathas dead was around 6,000; Wellesley lost 428 men killed and 1,138 wounded, or about one-third of his force.<sup>259</sup> The British soldiers were exhausted and parched by the day-long battle beneath the hot sun. The nearest available water was in the Jouah River, which Macintosh had crossed hours before

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<sup>254</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 pp. 163-169

<sup>255</sup> R. Cooper *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India* (Cambridge) 2003 pp. 110-112

<sup>256</sup> Ibid

<sup>257</sup> Major W. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India Conducted by General Lord Lake, Commander in Chief, and Major General Sir Arthur Wellesley; from its commencement in 1803 to its termination in 1806* (London) 1818, p.9

<sup>258</sup> R. Cooper *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India* (Cambridge) 2003 pp. 111-117

<sup>259</sup> R. Cooper *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India* (Cambridge) 2003 p.116.

under blistering enemy cannon fire. Now Macintosh and his men rushed to the same river to slake their thirst, as Blakiston recalled:

I shall never forget the rush to the river as soon as our safety would admit of the soldiers leaving their ranks; here, notwithstanding that its scanty waters, from the number ... killed in crossing its bed, were completely tinged with blood, yet few could resist the temptation to quench their burning thirst.<sup>260</sup>

Whilst, for some time after, serious pockets of resistance continued around the Marathas' territories where different groups were holed up in hill forts and strongholds, it was the Battle of Assaye that effectively spelt the end of the Marathas' defiance of British power. This victory also had personal benefits for Macintosh who, as a captain, was entitled to a share of the booty or 'prize money' seized from the various city-forts captured during the campaign.<sup>261</sup>

Eventually Macintosh and the remnants of the battered Madras Army made their way back to their garrisons around Mysore and Madras. Not long after his return to Madras, Captain Macintosh, now a veteran of two of the most important battles between the British and Indian forces, and many other smaller battles besides, applied for a furlough to return to England to see his friends and family. There can be no doubt that he must have been physically and emotionally exhausted by the battles, the bloodshed and his twelve years of service in India.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 pp. 177-178

<sup>261</sup> L. Crowell 'Military professionalism in the Colonial Context: the Madras Army' *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 24 (May 1990) p.258

<sup>262</sup> Part of the 1796 reforms introduced by the East India Company gave its army officers an entitlement to three years furlough after ten years of service. Three years off was not excessive given that the journey to England and then back to India would have taken upwards of a year at sea and that it would be another ten years before another furlough was granted, ten years that few officers could reasonably expect to survive.

## Chapter Eight: Marriage and Mutiny

In 1804 Macintosh left India for the long and dangerous voyage back to England. Apart from the obvious reasons for taking furlough in England another motive would have turned Macintosh's mind to the motherland; there was a chronic shortage of single European women in India.<sup>263</sup> This shortage meant that any single woman of British or European descent who arrived in India was an extremely valuable commodity and beyond the reach of a lowly captain such as Macintosh. Blakiston goes so far as to say that the shortage was such that there was a Madras ~~marriage~~ market". In this ~~market~~" an attractive woman of European descent could expect to marry a high-ranked civil or military officer in the Company's service and thereby secure wealth and social status. Although he also added:

—If of true European white, she is almost sure to go off tolerably well; but no (female) mixture of the Asiatic will suit persons of any rank."<sup>264</sup>

Such was the demand and the structure of Madras' European society that Macintosh would have had little or no chance of getting himself a European bride there. Conversely the idea of marrying a woman of mixed or Asian descent was tantamount to social suicide in the prejudiced expatriate society of 19<sup>th</sup> century Madras.<sup>265</sup> To get a wife Macintosh needed to return to Britain.

While it is not known if Macintosh's parents survived to greet their long-absent son on his return, we do know that his sister Sophia was in London and that she probably accompanied her brother as he fulfilled the important duty expected of officers returning to the motherland, that of delivering letters and messages to the family of their closest friends, the brother officers who still remained in India. One of Macintosh's closest friends was Lieutenant Henry Degraives, whose mother and aunt lived together in London.<sup>266</sup> Macintosh would have arrived at Mrs Degraives' home

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<sup>263</sup> P. Marshall 'British Society in India under the East India Company' *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Feb., 1997), p.90

<sup>264</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 p.51

<sup>265</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 pp. 48-52

<sup>266</sup> Macintosh and Degraives to Lord Bathurst 18 Dec. 1822; *Bonwick Papers* Vol. 3 p. 6275

with a bundle of letters and exotic gifts from her son. He would have been invited to stay the evening and dine with the Degraives family and to give them news of their son as well as his own news and views of the situation in India. There can be no doubt that Mrs Degraives and her extended family would have sat transfixed around the dinner table listening to Captain Macintosh's tales of terrible battles and exotic locations.<sup>267</sup>

Amongst those gathered at Mrs Degraives' home to meet Captain Macintosh would have been her neighbours and friends, the family of William and Catherine Nicholson. William Nicholson, an eminent English scientist famous for first using electricity to separate water into its component elements of hydrogen and oxygen, would no doubt have enjoyed talking to Macintosh as he himself had worked for the East India Company in his youth and made two trips to India. The Nicholson's eldest unmarried daughter was Mary, an interesting and adventurous young woman in her early twenties, who would soon become Hugh Macintosh's wife.<sup>268</sup> Although little is known of the early life of Mary Nicholson much may be inferred by a brief examination of the unusual influences and people who surrounded her from her birth in London in November 1787 until she moved to India in early 1807.<sup>269</sup>

Prior to her marriage, Mary Nicholson lived with her family in Red Lion Square in Soho during the same period that Peter and Henry Degraives also lived there and there can be little doubt that she would have known their family. Certainly Peter Degraives knew the Nicholson family, for he later claimed (falsely) to have been head assistant to William Nicholson in his laboratory.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> It was a meeting that would ultimately result in two marriages, for it is likely that this is when Sophia Macintosh met Peter Degraives.

<sup>268</sup> L. Campbell Ed. *The Asiatic Annual Register* 1807 p.214

<sup>269</sup> Register of Baptisms Church of St Marylebone 1787 London

<sup>270</sup> Mary Nicholson was probably named after Mary Wollstonecraft, the radical feminist writer and wife of her father's best friend, philosopher William Godwin.





William Nicholson circa 1812 by Samuel Drummond

Mary Nicholson grew up surrounded by many of the foremost thinkers of her time; friends and colleagues of her father who was also a respected philosopher, writer, publisher, engineer and inventor and member of the Coffee House Philosophical Society. His close associates included James Watt, Joseph Priestly and William Boulton the founder of the Soho Mint where, fourteen years later, the Macintosh and Degraes silver shilling would be made.

William Nicholson's closest friend was William Godwin, whose only daughter later became Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*. Godwin's wife, Mary Wollstonecraft the early radical feminist and philosopher, died shortly after the birth of her daughter in 1797; she was nursed by Nicholson and his family up until her death. Mary Nicholson would have been about ten years old when Mary Wollstonecraft died and so for all her early life would have had close connections with the thoughts and philosophies of this forward-thinking woman. There is also no doubt that she would have been in close contact with the young Mary (Godwin) Shelley as it is widely acknowledged that it was Mary Shelley's contact with William Nicholson which gave her the understanding of biology and electricity that was to be the inspiration for *Frankenstein*.<sup>271</sup> Another clue to Mary Nicholson's nature is the simple fact that she was prepared to marry Hugh Macintosh and move to live with him in India for such a move was a rare and radical one for a woman of her time.<sup>272</sup> One significant influence on her decision would have been the fact that her father had, as a young man, made two trips to India. Nicholson, who was fluent in French and Italian, was also responsible for translating several travel commentaries, including the

<sup>271</sup> B. Bennett *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: an introduction*. (London) 1998, p.38

<sup>272</sup> C. Blakiston *Twelve Years' Military Adventure* (London) 1829 pp 48-51

*Memoirs and Travels of Mauritius Augustus Count de Benyowsky* (2 vols., 1789); so there can be little doubt that he would have told his children tales of his travels to India, filling their minds with exotic imaginings.

Another factor which would have influenced Mary's decision to marry Macintosh was that the war with Napoleon had caused a general shortage of marriageable men in England. This would undoubtedly have made an unmarried, well-educated officer, 30 years of age, with a career in the East India Company's army an attractive proposition. There would also have been some subtle pressure on her to marry from her family as her father, whilst prolifically productive in his various endeavours, was not able to turn his technical and scientific achievements to a financial advantage. In other words, William Nicholson was, as they said in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, "financially embarrassed" and was destined to die a virtual pauper less than ten years later.<sup>273</sup>

On the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1806 Captain Macintosh married Mary Nicholson and set sail for Madras.<sup>274</sup> The newly weds would have had a private cabin on one of the Company's East Indiamen and during the six-month voyage their first and only son, William Hugh Macintosh, was conceived.

Once back in Madras, Macintosh and his wife would have spent some weeks performing the necessary social and official engagements before travelling through Mysore to the hill fort of Chittledrug, where Macintosh was to take command of the garrison there, which was comprised of his own 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment and an artillery battalion from the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Madras Native Infantry.<sup>275</sup>

Before he left Madras, conscious of his new responsibilities as a family man and the knowing the high mortality rate of men in his profession, Macintosh took out an insurance policy against his death or serious injury with the recently created Madras Military Fund, a pension fund to provide for the widows and children of officers of the Madras Army.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online ed. Nicholson, William (1753-1815) 2004

<sup>274</sup> British Library Asia Collection ref. N/2/3/17

<sup>275</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1929 pp. 129-130

<sup>276</sup> British Library India Collection, Item 5. L.AG.23.10.1

Macintosh and his heavily pregnant wife would have travelled by carriage, with a full entourage of servants to make the journey as comfortable as possible. Chittledrug was strategically situated in the central highlands of Mysore between Seringapatam and Bangalore and was considered to be almost impregnable because of its location at the base of a range of steep and rugged hills. With this natural barrier at its back all approaches to the town were protected by stone walls built in such a way as to gain the maximum advantage from the rugged environment.<sup>277</sup> As the commandant of this extensive fort Macintosh would have had one of the most prestigious residences there. Sadly Mary Macintosh shared the fate of her namesake, Mary Wollstonecraft, and that of many other 19<sup>th</sup> century women. Their son William Hugh Macintosh, was born on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1807, Mary Macintosh died not long after.<sup>278</sup>

After the death of his wife, Macintosh remained at Chittledrug. It is likely he planned to keep his son with him until the boy reached the age of seven or eight, when an officer's son would be expected to attend a boarding school in Madras or back in England. Unfortunately Macintosh's run of bad luck continued and his life took a disastrous turn when, less than two years after the birth of his son, he became involved in the mutiny of the officers of the Madras Army, an event known as the 'White Mutiny'.

The 1809 'White Mutiny' had its roots in changes made to the conditions of employment for the Company's army which were introduced as a result of the general reorganisation in 1796. Amongst other things, these changes removed, or attempted to remove, various official and unofficial 'fringe benefits' which the Company's army officers had come to think of as their just entitlements. The changes also had an unexpected effect of limiting the officers' opportunities for promotion by gradually but significantly increasing the numbers of junior officers in the ranks. The discontent grew over the years and, whilst the Company made some concessions to accommodate the officers' demands, serious issues remained unresolved. Foremost amongst these was the fact that the allowances for housing and other living expenses were significantly greater for Company officers in Bengal than in Madras, despite the

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<sup>277</sup> L. Bowering *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* (London) 1893 pp. 72-74

<sup>278</sup> British Library Asia Collection ref. N/2/4/48

fact that the cost of living was higher in Madras.<sup>279</sup> This and other perceived differences in the way they were treated placed the Madras officers under greater financial hardship than their Bengal counterparts, and caused them to feel less valued by the Company.<sup>280</sup>

Another issue, which affected Macintosh directly, was a considerable reduction to an allowance called “off-reckoning” which was a bonus officers, such as Macintosh, enjoyed if they made savings on clothing and equipping their regiments. This had the effect of further reducing the income of the Madras officers further increasing the differences between them and the Bengali officers.

Another issue of contention was the abolition by the Company of the Bazaar Tax, a long-held (though unofficial) right—inherited from minor local-government functionaries of the various Indian regimes—of the officer commanding a fort, a cantonment or such, to levy a tax on the stall holders and shop owners in bazaars in their precinct. The Bazaar Tax enabled officers to accumulate capital against their retirement at a time when there were no pension funds.<sup>281</sup> Despite the later introduction of a pension, the officers were extremely reluctant to surrender a tax which provided an immediate financial benefit in exchange for a benefit they might receive in the distant future if they were lucky enough to live that long, which was a genuine concern as only one in seven officers actually lived long enough to receive their pension.<sup>282</sup>

Thrown into this conglomeration of complaints, the Madras officers also had a longstanding jealousy of the officers of the King’s army. This problem originated in an 18<sup>th</sup> century rule that gave any officer of the King’s army automatic seniority over any officer of the Company’s army. This rule meant that a junior Captain of a couple of years’ standing in the King’s Army would outrank a senior Major or Colonel of twenty or thirty years’ standing in the Company’s Army. There was also a perception

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<sup>279</sup> D. Peers ‘Between Mars and Mammon: the east India Company and Efforts to Reform Its Army’ *The Historical Journal* Vol. 33 No. 2, 1990. pp. 390-394

<sup>280</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1929 pp.3-9

<sup>281</sup> Although the Bazaar Tax was officially abolished after the 1796 re-organisation when a pension plan was introduced by the Company quite a number of officers continued to collect it.

<sup>282</sup> L. Crowell ‘Military professionalism in the Colonial Context: the Madras Army’ *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 24 (May 1990) p.258

that officers from the King's Army were being given preferential treatment in appointments to the best and most lucrative commands or staff positions.

The Company's officers were also aware that, as a direct result of their efforts in subduing Central and Southern India, more and more regions saw military rule being replaced by the civilian rule of magistrates and other administrators whose salaries were often twice as large as those of the army officers whose functions they acquired.<sup>283</sup>

Added to this simmering cauldron of discontent were the growing number of junior officers whose ranks had been deliberately swollen by the Company in an attempt to increase the numbers of British-born officers who, it was felt, were more reliable than the Indian-born officers of British descent. These young men had arrived in India with hopes of fortune and glory only to find that the once-legendary opportunities for personal advancement were fast disappearing, if not already gone.

In the background, adding subtle heat to the simmering discontent in the Madras Army, were the influences of the more liberal thinking that found expression in Britain through the Whig party. The Whigs had a significant number of supporters in Madras, amongst whom were a Supreme Court judge, Sir Henry Gwillim; a leading barrister, Charles Marsh; and a successful free-trader named Thomas Parry, all of whom were agitating for changes to the Company's monopoly and powers.

In 1807, well aware of the fermenting discontent in Madras, Sir George Barlow took up his appointment as Governor of the Madras Presidency. It was a step down for Barlow for he had recently held the post of Governor General of all of India, being promoted into that position after the sudden death of Governor General Lord Cornwallis in October 1805, who was serving a second term in India.

Barlow had very definite views on the nature and use of authority and he moved rapidly to quell the drift toward rebellion amongst the Company's officers. It is not within the scope of this work to examine Barlow's actions and their consequences

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<sup>283</sup> P. Marshall 'The Whites of British India, 1780-1830' *The International History Review* Vol. 12, No. 1 (Feb., 1990) p. 27

except in the context of their effects on Hugh Macintosh. It is sufficient to say that, when in 1809, the disgruntled officers presented a list of demands to the government; Barlow refused to meet them and instead countered with a list of threats. Most of the disgruntled officers had been involved in the vicious fighting of the Mysore and Marathas campaigns and had seen many of their fellows die in the Company's service. They felt that the Company was not rewarding them for the sacrifices they had made in its service.

After a protracted period of posturing from both sides, in May 1809 the officers broke into open revolt.<sup>284</sup> The mutiny was not a tightly co-ordinated action and took different forms in different areas as would be expected with such a widely scattered group of officers, commanding garrisons all across southern India, who could only communicate by letters that could be expected to take at least several days to reach their destinations. This meant that each group of mutineers had to make decisions based on information that was often a week or more old.

The mutiny at the fortress at Seringapatam began in August under the leadership of Lt. Colonel Bell of the Madras Artillery who took control of the fort and seized the Company's armoury, treasury and granary. The mutineers then expelled the Company's civilian officials and indicated that they would fight to the death rather than surrender on the terms demanded by Governor Barlow. Once he had secured Seringapatam Lt. Colonel Bell sent out letters to the commandants of surrounding forts and asked them to come and join him at Seringapatam where, he said, there were sufficient supplies to withstand a major siege and the money with which to pay the wages of the sepoy troops, thereby ensuring their loyalty. To ensure they had sufficient funds to finance their rebellion Bell also seized a passing Company caravan that was carrying a treasure of 30,000 pagodas (about £12,000).<sup>285</sup> Macintosh, the commandant at Chittledrug, was among those who received Bell's invitation and the assurance that Bell and his brother officers were prepared to fight to the death against the oppressive demands of Governor Barlow.

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<sup>284</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1929 pp. 81-82

<sup>285</sup> The pagoda was the official currency of Madras until 1818; a gold coin worth around half a pound sterling. M. Edney *Mapping an Empire: the geographical construction of British India* 1990 p.17

Macintosh responded in the affirmative, no doubt being moved by a sense of loyalty to his brother officers as well as by considerations of what the loss of the Bazaar Tax and other incidental sources of income might mean. On the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> August, he and the other officers (including Lieutenant Henry Degraives) and the two battalions garrisoned at Chittledrug —a total of about 1120 officers and men plus the families of the sepoys and other camp followers—marched out of the fort and headed for Seringapatam.<sup>286</sup>

Unfortunately for Macintosh the government forces in Bangalore had received word of his intentions and despatched a significant force, including the feared 59<sup>th</sup> Dragoons, a detachment of light infantry and a large number of Mysore cavalry, to prevent Macintosh and his men from reaching Seringapatam.

The Mysore cavalry technically belonged to the Raja and were under the command of an Indian officer named Rama Row. The government realised that the Mysore horse would be the first to reach Macintosh, and Rama Row was under orders to treat with him under a flag of truce and to try to convince him to halt his march until negotiations could be undertaken that might resolve the issue. The two men met only a day's march from Seringapatam and after extended discussions Macintosh assured Rama Row that he was determined not to be the first to commence hostilities and, on that basis, agreed to a temporary halt.<sup>287</sup> Unfortunately, the following evening Macintosh received another letter from Bell at Seringapatam urging him to make haste as the fort was under threat of imminent attack.<sup>288</sup> Macintosh's response was to mobilise his men and, at ten o'clock that night, they began a forced march toward Seringapatam. Seeing this, Rama Row attacked the Chittledrug troops with his cavalry but was easily repulsed by Macintosh's seasoned infantry.<sup>289</sup>

By dawn H.M. army's mounted Dragoons had joined with the Mysore Horse and the combined force rapidly closed on Macintosh's forces. First catching up with the camp followers and stragglers trailing behind the marching troops, the Dragoons and Mysore Horse —. commenced a most inhuman butchery ... they did not spare even

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<sup>286</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1929 p.129

<sup>287</sup> Ibid

<sup>288</sup> T. Blackburn *A miscellany of mutinies and massacres in India* (Delhi) 2007 p.78

<sup>289</sup> Ibid

women and children ...” slashing into the unarmed civilians as they fled toward the safety of Seringapatam which was now only about three kilometres away.<sup>290</sup> Here, on the same ground where he had risked his life for the East India Company to fight the forces of Tipu Sultan ten years earlier, Macintosh was now forced to turn and fight against the King’s Army or allow them to slaughter his people. It was a decision that must have torn Macintosh between his allegiance to King and Country and his loyalty to his troops and “brother officers”.

To give the bulk of his troops and other followers a chance to reach Seringapatam, Macintosh led a small force out to counterattack the rapidly approaching horsemen while Henry Degraives led the remainder of his people to safety. Before the two men parted Henry Degraives brought his horse up beside Macintosh and insisted that they swap caps for Degraives’ cap was a sturdier one than the cap Macintosh was wearing, with a thick leather flap of four layers of camel hide that hung down to cover and protect the neck. Degraives, seeing the Dragoons charging toward them, sabres drawn, insisted that Macintosh take his cap.

As Degraives and the bulk of the Chittledrug garrison raced toward Seringapatam Macintosh formed his rear guard into battle lines to block the charging cavalry. In the fight that followed Macintosh received a sabre slash to his neck which knocked him off his horse and cut through the protective camel hide that was protecting his neck, as well as through the silk neck scarf beneath the leather. By the time the sword blade reached his actual neck, though, its force was all but spent and he suffered only a minor wound rather than decapitation.<sup>291</sup>

Under the protective cover of cannon fire from the walls of Seringapatam, Henry Degraives and the remaining officers managed to get about 700 of the Chittledrug troops to safety, though they had no choice but to leave Macintosh lying in the dust, stunned and wounded. The Dragoons abandoned their pursuit of the fleeing troops and turned on what remained of Macintosh’s rear guard, chasing down and killing the fleeing Sepoys and capturing their commander. Of the men who had stayed with Macintosh in the rear guard action, including another British officer, almost all were

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<sup>290</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* 1929 p.257 Letter of James Baker to his brother 29<sup>th</sup> August 1809

<sup>291</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1929 pp. 229-260



killed or wounded.<sup>292</sup> Macintosh, being both an officer and British, was taken as a prisoner to the authorities in Mysore; it was the end of his career in India.<sup>293</sup>

Not long after Macintosh's capture, the mutiny was brought to a negotiated end by the sensible intervention of the new Governor General of India, Lord Minto. Under the terms of settlement between Minto and the mutineers, all officers would be reinstated without penalty except where they had been directly involved in the spilling of the blood of loyal forces. Only a handful of officers fell into this category; Macintosh was one of them. Lieutenant Degraes was pardoned, it being argued that he had not taken part in the battle with the Dragoons and in any case that he had been obeying Macintosh's orders. At his Court Marshall in early 1810, Macintosh was found guilty of mutiny, for which the penalty was death. However, not wanting to aggravate an already delicate situation with the Company's officers, Lord Minto did not press for capital punishment. Of all the officers who took part in the mutiny, only Macintosh and three others were dishonourably discharged from the East India Company's Army and banned from future service.<sup>294</sup> It was a mild punishment for such a serious offence, but it still carried serious consequences, including the loss of pensions and other benefits.

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<sup>292</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1929 p.259

<sup>293</sup> Ibid

<sup>294</sup> A. Cardew *The White Mutiny* (Bombay) 1929 pp. 136-140

## Chapter Nine: Serving the Shah

Though Macintosh was in a very difficult position—he had been dishonourably discharged from the Company's army—he still had the sympathy and respect of its officers who knew that he had been both true to their united cause and had fought bravely and honourably to protect his troops. Though he could well be described as an honourable mutineer, and while most of the instigators of the mutiny escaped all sanctions, Macintosh had to pay a high price for the stand he took. He had lived in India almost exclusively since he was 16 years old; his only child had been born in India and his wife had died there: he had no other life.

Macintosh was officially dismissed from the Madras Army in April 1810. Fortunately, his reputation and connections ensured that he did not end up destitute, for there were always opportunities for men with Macintosh's skills and background. However, these would not be in India, where the Company's control was almost absolute. In preparation for the long sea voyage back to England, Macintosh had his son, William Hugh Macintosh (aged two years and seven months), baptised at the chapel of Fort St George in July 1810.<sup>295</sup>

As Macintosh sailed back to England, his old school friend Henry Ellis was establishing his presence in the Shah's court in Tehran, a fact which was to have the most profound implications for Macintosh. The two men had remained in contact over the preceding years as Ellis had been working for the East India Company in a civilian capacity in Bengal before travelling to Persia with Sir John Malcolm in 1809. Unlike Macintosh, Ellis had continued his formal education and had focused on a career as a diplomat, which was certainly a reasonable ambition given that his father was Lord Hobart. Like Macintosh, he was also an expert in Asian languages, including Persian.<sup>296</sup> Not long after Macintosh's court marshal Ellis had become

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<sup>295</sup> The long delay between birth and baptism was not uncommon, for example Hugh Macintosh was born in 1776 but not baptised until 1778, whilst it appears that Peter Degraives was born in 1778 and not baptised until 1780, although this gap may be the result of Degraives changing his birth date as the Parish records at the Church of St George the Martyr state that Degraives was born in November 1780, though while he would change his birth day is a puzzle.

<sup>296</sup> *The Annual Report of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17<sup>th</sup> May 1856 p.5

attached to Sir Gore Ouseley's Embassy to the Court of the Shah of Persia in the capacity of a secretary.

It seems likely that Ellis joined the party of Ouseley, the newly appointed British Ambassador to Persia, at Bombay in January 1811, when Ouseley's ship, the *Lion*, stopped to pick up additional supplies, guides and a significant number of British military officers who were to be advisors and trainers to the Persian army.<sup>297</sup> Whilst there had been several diplomatic missions sent from Britain to Tehran over the preceding decades, Ouseley was the first British Ambassador to Persia in over 150 years. One of his primary aims in travelling to Tehran was related to training Persian troops in European-style warfare to prevent Russian or French penetration of North India via the land route from Europe.<sup>298</sup>

For its part, Persia was seeking to capitalise on the fact that the European powers were vying for influence, alliances and territory with the major powers in Asia, and thereby modernise its armies in response to Russian aggression at its northern borders. For most of the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the French held sway in Tehran with promises of military assistance. However, by 1809 the Shah's advisors realised that the French would not or could not fulfil their promises. This gave the British a diplomatic opportunity which they quickly seized.<sup>299</sup>

One of Ouseley's offerings to the Shah was to provide officers as military advisers to train the Persian troops in modern British methods of warfare.<sup>300</sup> These British soldiers were almost immediately involved in heavy action against the Russians in 1812 when Persia and Russia engaged in full-scale war. However, while this was going on, Britain and Russia made peace, under the terms of which it was agreed that

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<sup>297</sup> W. Ouseley *Travels in Various Counties of the East, More Particularly Persia* (London) 1819 pp.148-149

<sup>298</sup> The reasons for Sir William's embassy were multiple. At the time of Ouseley's embassy Britain was at war with both Russia and France. The French had held considerable influence in Tehran through the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but that influence was on the wane and Ouseley was expected to make a definitive alliance with Persia against France. The East India Company was also concerned about the possibility of the Afghans invading northern India and saw Persia as a means of controlling Afghanistan.

<sup>299</sup> H. Bailey (ed.) *Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge) 1991 pp. 374-377

<sup>300</sup> The superiority of European military tactics had been effectively demonstrated in India for more than half a century, as had the hiring of European officers to train native forces. Hyder Ali, Tipu and the Marathas ruler Mahadji Sindhia, to name just a few, had done so with great effect.

Britain would not supply military support to Persia. Ouseley was ordered to ensure all British officers ceased their work within the Persian Army. This would no doubt have placed Ouseley in an awkward position at the Shah's court had he not been able to exploit a loophole in the Anglo/Russian treaty. This entailed the covert recruitment of former British officers into the Persian Army. In late 1812, two former officers, Christie and Lindsay, commanded sections of the Persian Army against the Russians in the decisive Battle of Aslanduz.<sup>301</sup> However, for the long term there was probably no one better suited for such a role than Hugh Macintosh, who was no longer in the Company's employ and was also fluent in the Persian language. In 1813 Henry Ellis returned to England, located Macintosh and offered him a position that saw him nominally attached to the British Embassy, but actually in the employ of the Shah.<sup>302</sup> Furthermore Macintosh was ranked as a general in the Persian army and very highly paid. Whilst there is no exact figure on Macintosh's salary, Sir John Malcolm (a regular British envoy to Persia over many years) stated that the Shah, to encourage Persian soldiers and officers to participate in the European training programs, offered pay "... superior to any other class in Persia" as well as excellent fringe benefits. Persian officers under the leadership of the European trainers were being paid up to five hundred Tomans (only slightly less than £500) per annum.<sup>303</sup> This amount was slightly more than an East India Company Colonel, so it is reasonable to assume that Macintosh, with the rank of General, would have been paid considerably more than that.<sup>304</sup>

Apart from training and commanding Persian troops, Macintosh was asked to translate British army "rules and regulations" into Persian to enable Persian officers to follow British command procedures.<sup>305</sup> Toward the end of 1813, Macintosh set out on the overland route to Tehran in a party of diplomats and former officers led by the new British *chargé d'affaires* Henry Willock, who had also served in the East India Company's Madras army. Willock had travelled to Persia several times from India and was an acknowledged expert on both the language and the culture.<sup>306</sup> Although he

<sup>301</sup> P. Sykes *A History of Persia Vol.2* (London) 1951 pp. 313-314.

<sup>302</sup> *Memorial of Macintosh to Lt. Gov. Arthur* 1<sup>st</sup> May 1828, CSO 1/281/6767

<sup>303</sup> J. Malcolm *A History of Persia Vol. 2.* (London) 1829 pp. 357-359

<sup>304</sup> Peers D. 'Between Mars and Mammon: The East India Company and Efforts to Reform its Army' *The Historical Journal* Vol. 33, No. 2 (June 1990) p. 401

<sup>305</sup> *Memorial of Macintosh to Lt. Gov. Arthur* CSO 1/281/6767

<sup>306</sup> D. Wright 'Sir John Malcolm and the Order of the Sun and Lion' *Iran* Vol. 17. 1979 pp. 137-138

was ten years Macintosh's junior Willock would have been well aware of the older officer's military reputation as he had been in Madras prior to the Mutiny. The party would have travelled by sea to either Palestine or Constantinople then overland to Tehran.

Once in Persia Macintosh appears to have acted in various capacities for the British Embassy before being made Commandant of the large frontier city of Erivan.<sup>307</sup> Interestingly this was a position similar to that he had held in Chittledrug although now he was under the direct command of the Persian Crown Prince, Abbas Nirza<sup>308</sup>

The Treaty of Gulistan in October 1813 may have brought hostilities between Persia and Russia to an end but Macintosh's military activities continued.<sup>309</sup> Erivan became a frontier post and its strength and readiness was critical to Persia's future.<sup>310</sup> At the same time the destabilisation caused by Persia's military losses to Russia inspired uprisings against the Shah in various quarters of Persia and the army was regularly sent to quell these, which it generally did successfully.<sup>311</sup>

Sometime toward the end of 1818 Macintosh was severely wounded, the exact nature of his wounds is not known but they were bad enough to bring a permanent end to his military career and to his years in Persia.<sup>312</sup> Macintosh left Persia in late 1818 or early 1819 and returned to Britain where he renewed his acquaintance with his brother-in-law Peter Degraives. This was an acquaintance that the virtually penniless Degraives would have immediately seen as being one he might turn to his advantage, for Macintosh had returned with a considerable amount of capital accumulated over

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<sup>307</sup> The city of Erivan is now part of Armenia and is known as Yerevan and was ceded to the Russians in 1828 after the second Persian-Russian war.

<sup>308</sup> *Memorial of Macintosh to Lt. Gov. Arthur* 1<sup>st</sup> May 1828, CSO 1/281/6767

<sup>309</sup> During this period Henry Ellis returned to Persia as the deputy Ambassador *ad interim* through 1814 and 1815 primarily to finalise the treaty between Persia and Britain. Macintosh would later use Ellis as a character referee when he applied to Lord Bathurst for permission to immigrate to Hobart in 1821.

<sup>310</sup> D. Boulger *England and Russia in Central Asia Vol. 2*, (London) 1889 pp. 205-207

<sup>311</sup> P. Sykes *A History of Persia Vol. 2*, (London) 1951 pp. 314-315

<sup>312</sup> These wounds were mentioned by Edward Markham, who met Macintosh at the Cascades in Hobart in 1834. Markham stated in his publication *Voyage to Van Dieman's Land*, that Macintosh spent many years in Persia teaching the Persians "European tactics" and also that he was "severely wounded".

his years in India and Persia, probably a sum of around £10,000, plus a promise of a life long pension from the Shah of Persia.<sup>313</sup>

Macintosh's return occurred about the same time that Degraives was attempting to convince Stewart-Mackenzie to back his various proposals for the Isle of Lewis. When Degraives realised that Stewart-Mackenzie was not going to facilitate his great works on Lewis, he reverted to his "Plan B", which involved buying a ship and sailing to Hobart to build a saw mill. Like most of the schemes Degraives attempted to initiate, whilst he had the ideas, expertise and energy, he had no capital to buy a ship or all the other things necessary for such an undertaking: however, his brother-in-law did. It was an interesting situation, for it is likely that Macintosh was at a loss with what to do with himself now that his military career was over.<sup>314</sup> He was one of the many out-of-work military officers scattered across Britain and though he had the advantage of possessing significant capital it was not a large enough sum to provide him with an income adequate to support himself and his son.<sup>315</sup> Macintosh would have known of men in a similar position to himself making the choice of immigrating to Australia.<sup>316</sup> The astute Degraives would have been aware of all this and it would not have taken much "grooming" from Degraives to paint Macintosh a promising picture of a new life in Hobart where Degraives could use his genius to create a huge income for them both with the help of Macintosh's capital. Degraives' argument would have been greatly assisted by the fact that in this same period the idea of emigrating to Australia was very popular in Scotland, particularly for men in Macintosh's situation, with the local press and various prominent figures promoting such emigration.<sup>317</sup>

If Macintosh was open to his brother-in-law's ideas he was also no fool. He knew that if he was going to supply the bulk of the capital then he should be the major partner in the venture, which is one of the reasons why in late 1820, when they purchased the *Hope*, the ownership of the vessel remained solely in Macintosh's name

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<sup>313</sup> Letter *Macintosh to Bathurst* 20<sup>th</sup> June 1821 PRO C.O. 201/107 -M": D. MacMillan *Scotland and Australia 1788 – 1850* 1967 p.85

<sup>314</sup> Letter *Degraives to Frankland* 6<sup>th</sup> January 1836 CSO 1/281/6767

<sup>315</sup> G. Sherington *Australia's Immigrants 1788-1978* (Sydney) 1980 pp. 29-32

<sup>316</sup> M. Dillon "Convict Labour and Colonial Society in the Campbell Town Police District: 1820 – 1839" 2008. p.48

<sup>317</sup> D.S. MacMillan, *Scotland and Australia 1788-1850* (Oxford) 1967 pp. 71-131



### Section Three: The *Hope* and on to Hobart.

#### Chapter Ten: The History of the Colonial Ship *Hope*.

There are many versions of Degraives' life in the period from 1821 to 1824. All of these, however, revolve around the ship *Hope* and it is important to understand the history of that vessel in order to unpick the tangled web of claim and counter claim.

The *Hope* is primarily remembered because in 1823-24 she carried Macintosh and Degraives from England to Van Diemen's Land, along with the personnel, machinery and other equipment that they would use to build their sawmill at the Cascades on the slopes of Mount Wellington.<sup>1</sup> The *Hope* is also remembered because of her connection with a famous Tasmanian legend generally known as the lost treasure of Bruny Island. This popular story has its source in the vessel's loss on Hope Beach on South Arm at the mouth of the Derwent River in April 1827.<sup>2</sup>

When Macintosh and Degraives acquired the *Hope* she was already an old ship with a long history—a history that her new owners deliberately obscured. Consequently there is much more to the story of this vessel than is told by the many maritime history books within which she is mentioned in the context of being Degraives' ship. For apart from the brief period she was an instrument of Degraives' schemes, but still during the period that Macintosh was her owner she continued her role as a British colonial ship, carrying whale oil, whale bone and seal skins as well as timber and other agricultural produce from Hobart back to England or along the circuitous Australasian trading route.<sup>3</sup> On the return route she carried migrant passengers as well as much needed coin and merchandise, stopping along the way there and back to trade at various ports in Africa or Asia where products such as sugar or tea could be got. When back in Australian waters she also worked the inter-colonial sea routes moving goods and people between Sydney and Hobart and other minor ports.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. Bingham *Cascade, A taste of History* (Hobart) 1993 p.3

<sup>2</sup> H. O'May *Shipwrecks of Tasmania* (Hobart) 1954 p.14

<sup>3</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 13 March 1825 p.3

<sup>4</sup> *Colonial Times* 31.3.1825 p.2



The 1827 destruction of the *Hope* was a significant shock to Hobart's population and to the colonial authorities who had been complacent regarding the safety of the entrance to Hobart's harbour, for the Derwent had developed an international reputation as one of the safest anchorages in the world. The wrecking of the *Hope* sullied this reputation and soon resulted in the erection of Hobart's first navigation light, which was built on Iron Pot Island at the mouth of the Derwent River. It also resulted in the dismissal of the government pilot, Michael Mansfield, who, as a consequence, became the first European to settle and farm the Blackman's Bay area in Kingsborough, south of Hobart.<sup>5</sup> However these events occurred after Macintosh and Degraes had arrived in Hobart and are reasonably well documented. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the prior history of the *Hope* and explain how the present histories of this vessel came to contain errors that were the result of Degraes' deliberate actions. In particular this chapter will clarify issues related to the *Hope's* identity, age and ownership without which it is impossible to correctly navigate the conflicting accounts of her first abortive attempt to sail to Hobart in 1821 and the significant and far-reaching consequences of what followed.

The *Hope* was a sharply built, barque rigged, two decked, wooden sailing ship of 231 tons burthen built in Bristol in the year 1793 constructed of well seasoned English oak.<sup>6</sup> She was about the same size as Captain Cook's barque *Endeavour*, though of a very different shape.<sup>7</sup> The term "sharply built" implies a streamlined hull and a bow constructed for speed; the sharply built design was the precursor to the later clippers generally associated with design innovations that came out of North America (though this was not the case with the *Hope*, as she was specifically designated as being British built by Lloyds' Insurance). A feature of the "sharp" design was that some storage space in the hull was sacrificed in the structural streamlining of the shape of the vessel, particularly at the bow; it was a feature that was to play an important part in the *Hope's* story.

The fact that the *Hope* was built in Britain and of seasoned British oak was extremely important because these qualities were specifically required for her to obtain a First

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<sup>5</sup> J. Gardam *A History of Brown's River* (Hobart) 1998 p.86

<sup>6</sup> Lloyds' Shipping Registers 1800-1819

<sup>7</sup> The word "burthen" is an old English word meaning "burden", referring to a ship's carrying capacity or tonnage. Lloyds Register 1800 & *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 p.4

Class” or –A1” rating with Lloyds’ Insurance. This in turn determined the type of insured cargoes that the *Hope* could carry. First Class or A1 rated ships could be insured to carry any goods, including goods which might be –liable to sea (water) damage” (such as sugar). This was important because the *Hope* was originally and primarily employed in trading between the various British colonies in the Caribbean and ports in Britain and, occasionally, Canada, carrying a variety of cargoes, such as timber and tobacco.<sup>8</sup> In her early years, however, her primary cargo was sugar—a product that spoiled easily if exposed to water.

Through the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries most of the European colonial powers attempted to acquire territories in the Caribbean in order to gain a stake in the lucrative sugar industry. The Netherlands, France, Spain and Britain all established plantation-based colonies there which relied almost exclusively on slave labour. After wresting Jamaica from the Spanish in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Britain set about to greatly increase her territorial holdings in the region through a series of treaties with France and the Netherlands which saw these nations ultimately cede to Britain the islands of St Lucia, Grenada, Dominica, St Vincent, Trinidad, Tobago and what was to become British Guiana. Through this period Britain also gained control over most of the Caribbean slave trade. These two combined factors gave her effective control of a large proportion of the world’s sugar production.

For most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century British plantation owners and merchants made vast fortunes from the slave based sugar production using slave labour taken mostly from the West African coast. Whilst slave ships were specially built for carrying human cargo from the West Coast of Africa to the Caribbean’s main slave markets in Jamaica, and did not engage in other trade, ships of the *Hope*’s size and design, primarily used to carry general merchandise, often engaged in inter-colonial slave trading, carrying slaves from the main slave markets in Jamaica to sell in other ports around the Caribbean and the Americas as they picked up and discharged other cargoes.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Lloyds’ Register 1811

<sup>9</sup> W. Minchinton ‘Characteristics of British Slaving Vessels 1698-1775’ *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 20 No.1 (Summer 1989) pp 53-57

The returns on investments (and in trade generally) in the West Indies remained high until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when increased sugar production in other parts of the world, such as the Dutch East Indies, began to reduce prices in Europe. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the global depression of sugar prices combined with the 1807 abolition of the British slave trade to affect a severe down turn in the economies of the Caribbean colonies from which they would not recover for nearly two hundred years. The *Hope* began her life in the Caribbean just prior to this downturn.

The *Hope*'s A1 rating lasted for 12 years after which time Lloyds' policies allowed that ships still ~~in~~ "perfect repair" could apply for an E1 or 2<sup>nd</sup> Class rating. The *Hope* was rated 2<sup>nd</sup> Class after 1805 but by 1819 she had lost her 2<sup>nd</sup> class rating and was downgraded to 3<sup>rd</sup> class, which meant that she could not be insured to carry goods that might be damaged by seawater.

Because she spent most of her life in tropical waters, the timber of the *Hope*'s hull was under constant attack from the wood-eating, worm-like clam commonly known as the teredo worm or ~~shipworm~~". These tiny, invasive molluscs are often called the termites of the sea because of the extensive damage they cause often goes undetected: for, while the ship's hull may appear perfectly sound and undamaged, the internal timbers may be completely rotten, riddled with teredo worms. The reason for the undamaged appearance is that the teredo ~~worms~~" invade the timber of a ship when at an almost microscopic size during the free swimming stage of their life cycle. When they bore into the timber of the hull they leave only a tiny hole behind them. The presence of the worms is further concealed by the fact that their entrance hole is ~~hatched~~" by two ~~plates~~" which can be opened or closed by the worm. Once inside the hull the teredo worms bore into the timber allowing water into their burrow by controlling the ~~hatch~~" at the entrance through which a siphon extends, but which is withdrawn into the burrow if the worm is disturbed. The teredo worm, like the termite, eats the wood particles that its boring produces and also any microscopic creatures that enter its burrow. Though the entrance point may be microscopic the burrow itself is often over one centimetre in diameter. In cooler waters the burrows are rarely more than five or six centimetres in depth but in warmer tropical waters the teredo worm's burrow can often penetrate a ship's timber to a depth of two metres, causing severe structural damage. Teredos also grow very rapidly, whilst they are less than one

quarter of a millimetre in length when they attach to a ship they can reach 10 centimetres in length after just one month inside a ship's hull.<sup>10</sup>

Teredo worms were a serious problem for all ships that sailed tropical waters so the *Hope*, like Cook's *Endeavour* and other 18<sup>th</sup> century ships, was originally iron sheathed to provide a limited degree of protection against the worm's predations. Iron sheathing was a process whereby the section of the hull below the water line was coated with a mixture of tar and hair; this layer was then covered by planks of about half an inch thickness, then the planks were imbedded with thousands of broad headed nails so as to produce an "iron clad" effect. The nails were made of wrought iron which does not rust as rapidly as other forms of iron.<sup>11</sup> This method was only effective until the salt water got past the tar, which became brittle in colder waters and cracked under the stress of the normal flexing of the hull moving through waves. Once the tar cracked the intrusion of the salt water allowed access for the teredo worms which then bored into the wood of the hull and keel resulting in rot. This in turn caused more sections of tar to fall away allowing further entry of the wood boring worms into the ship's timbers. It was exactly this effect that forced Captain Cook to bring the *Endeavour* into Batavia for repairs and which ultimately resulted in the loss of a large number of the *Endeavour's* crew and company through disease.<sup>12</sup>

The *Hope's* original iron sheathing was applied when she was built in 1793 and was replaced in 1801, then in 1812 the iron sheathing was removed and her hull was recovered with copper sheathing.<sup>13</sup> The copper sheathing of a ship involved the tacking of thin copper sheet to the exterior of a ship's hull. Although copper was very expensive in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, copper sheathing was so very much more effective than iron sheathing for preventing damage to the hull by worms and other agents that it easily justified the expense as the copper did not rust and only rarely cracked thus removing many of the problems associated with iron sheathing. As well as preventing the access of marine organisms to the hull's timber the copper sheathing had a chemical property that prevented marine plants from attaching to the hull. Because of

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<sup>10</sup> R. Sterns 'The Teredo, or Shipworm' *The American Naturalist* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Feb., 1886) pp. 131-136; *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Vol. 21, 1963 p.946.

<sup>11</sup> R. Parkin *H. M. Bark Endeavour* 1997 p. 71

<sup>12</sup> R. Parkin *H.M. Bark Endeavour* 1997 p.351

<sup>13</sup> *Lloyds' Shipping Register* 1800-1820

these qualities the majority of shipping was copper sheathed by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Records of who originally built the *Hope* have not been found. The earliest records are in the Lloyds Insurance Registry of 1800; these show that in that year she was owned by a person named Monckley and that her master was a Captain Wilson. It is likely that Monckley was the original owner and that he sold the *Hope* the year before she was to lose her A1 rating with Lloyds, in 1804. The *Hope*'s ownership then passed to Gibbs & Company, the master being Captain Gardiner. Gibbs & Company owned her until 1814 when ownership passed to Hooper & Company who retained ownership until she was sold to Hugh Macintosh sometime in 1820.<sup>14</sup> During the period between 1800 and 1820 the *Hope* appears to have sailed almost exclusively between Britain and various British ports around the Caribbean such as Barbados, Jamaica and Tobago.<sup>15</sup>

In 1820 the *Hope* arrived in England on a run from Honduras carrying a primary cargo of mahogany timber for Hooper & Co under the command of Captain E. Seaton. Based on later testimonies, it is clear that Hooper & Co believed the *Hope*'s days of sailing safely and profitably across the Atlantic were over; her copper sheathing was worn through in many places and due for replacement and the holes in the copper meant her hull would be riddled with teredo worm.<sup>16</sup> For these reasons Hooper & Co. sold their ship to Hugh Macintosh for just £850: the low price being indicative of the poor condition that the *Hope* was in at the time of purchase.<sup>17</sup>

At that time, a reasonable price for a second-hand sailing ship of 231 tons burthen in good condition was between £2,500 and £3,000.<sup>18</sup> A good example of this is again Cook's *Endeavour*, which was just over three years old when purchased by the Navy in 1768 for £2,800.<sup>19</sup> Prices were normally worked out at a price per ton rate, with a

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<sup>14</sup> Lloyds register shows this transfer of ownership from Hooper to Macintosh only, with no mention of Degraeves although, where ships are owned by more than one person, joint ownership is always shown in the register.

<sup>15</sup> Lloyds' Registers 1800-1820

<sup>16</sup> *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 p. 4

<sup>17</sup> Utas Archives M10/11/1

<sup>18</sup> Ron Parsons: Australian Maritime History Society; Personal Communication 24.5.09

<sup>19</sup> R. Parkin *H. M. Bark Endeavour* (Melb.)1997 p. 68

price of around £10 per ton of capacity (burthen) for a new ship. Hence the *Endeavour*, being of 368 tons burthen and just over three years old, sold for just under eight pounds per ton. This price was for a relatively new ship in good condition, with the term “good condition” being primarily related to the condition of the hull. By comparison the *Hope* sold for under £3 per ton. As the price per ton did not usually include the rigging and such things as anchors, cable and other extras, only the cost of the actual ship, it is clear that the *Hope*, which came with rigging, was sold at knock-down value.<sup>20</sup>

By 1820 the *Hope* was 27 years old; an old, worm-riddled, ship with significant structural problems, including worn copper sheathing, a rotten keel and rotting timbers in her hull, the result of her years plying the tropical waters of the Caribbean, nineteen of those years being without the protection of copper sheathing. Lloyds’ Register records show that from 1802 to 1821 she had required notable repair work every year and, whilst the records do not show the exact details of these repairs, annotations show that this work was often of a major nature.<sup>21</sup>

Generally the existing literature on the *Hope* and Peter Degraives states either that Degraives and Macintosh, or Degraives on his own purchased the *Hope* for the specific purpose of transporting themselves and their families, plus a load of paying passengers and a substantial quantity of machinery, equipment and merchandise to Hobart Town in Van Dieman’s Land.<sup>22</sup> Other writers claim either that Degraives chartered the *Hope*, or was allowed to use it by the trustee of his creditors.<sup>23</sup>

Contemporaries were also under the impression that the ship was jointly owned. Mary Reibey (the ex-convict who became one of Sydney’s first successful business women) was in London in the early 1820s.<sup>24</sup> She had returned to the “old country” on an extended tour with her daughters during which she had also purchased goods not easily obtainable in Sydney. In early 1821 she had returned to London from Glasgow

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>21</sup> *Lloyds Register* 1800 to 1821

<sup>22</sup> M. Bingham *Cascade; a taste of History* (Hobart) 1991 p.4

<sup>23</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 p.7

<sup>24</sup> Mary Reibey (1777-1855) was born on 12 May 1777 in Lancashire, England. At age 13, an orphan living with her grandmother, she was convicted of horse stealing and sentenced to be transported for seven years. She arrived in Sydney in 1792. In September 1794 she married Thomas Reibey, a young Irishman who had worked for the East India Company. They began a number of business and trading ventures together. When Thomas died Mary took over the businesses.

and was residing near the London docks. Through February and March she spent some of her time inspecting ships to select a suitable vessel for her return voyage. She inspected the *Hope* and on several occasions and dined with Macintosh and Degraives. In her journal Mrs Reibey leaves no doubt that, in her mind, Macintosh and Degraives were joint owners of the *Hope*. Yet despite Reibey's impression the records from Lloyds' Insurance Register for the period show unambiguously that Macintosh was the sole owner of the *Hope* from 1821 to 1826.<sup>25</sup> If in 1821 most people who had dealings with Degraives or the *Hope* were under the impression that Degraives was the owner, or at least the principle owner, the modern confusion about the ownership of the *Hope* is understandable.<sup>26</sup> Yet while giving people the impression he owned the *Hope*, Degraives also made a deliberate effort to obscure and confuse her identity and origins by altering details in the documents associated with her re-insurance with Lloyds. He probably did so to avoid having her seized by creditors.<sup>27</sup>

Regardless of who actually owned the *Hope* Degraives was certainly the principle instigator in the events that followed her purchase. There can also be no doubt that he was short of cash and that he sought further finance for his project by maximising the number of fare paying passengers that could be put on board the ship. To this end a ship joiner, John Forsyth, was employed to build extra cabins between the *Hope's* two decks, substantially reducing storage space below decks but significantly increasing the potential for immediate income from passengers who had to pay cash up front to book their passage.<sup>28</sup> The alterations to the *Hope* were carried out in London in the Lime-house Canal which still joins the Thames near the docks at Blackwall.<sup>29</sup> While the work being done in the canal increased the *Hope's* passenger carrying capacity, Degraives refused to spend money on the much needed structural repairs that the aging vessel required before attempting the long voyage to Van Diemen's Land.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> There were various reasons for the apparent inconsistencies, which are related to the numerous court actions that Peter Degraives was involved in at that period of time, but these issues are complex and will be dealt with specifically in the following chapter.

<sup>26</sup> P. Walker *All We Inherit* (Hobart) 1968 p.63

<sup>27</sup> Lloyds' Registers 1800 to 1826

<sup>28</sup> *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 p. 4

<sup>29</sup> M. Reibey *Journal 1820-21* 16<sup>th</sup> February 1821

<sup>30</sup> *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 page 4; *Sworn statement of R. Mather & J. Duncan*, 17<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1821 Utas Archives M10/9

So it was that by the middle of 1821 the *Hope* was transformed from being a ship principally designed for carrying cargo to a ship that could carry some cargo and a very large number of paying passengers. At the same time it was Degrares' unwillingness to make those structural repairs that almost fatally interrupted the *Hope*'s first voyage to Van Diemen's Land and led to her being seized by the British port authorities.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>*London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 page 4; Sworn statement of R. Mather & J. Duncan, 17<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1821 Utas Archives M10/9



## Chapter Eleven: Refitting and Finances

”Called on Captain Macintosh who lives in Ratcliffe Highway, he having purchased a ship called the *Hope*, and intending to take passengers to N. S. Wales. He called a Coach and we went on board; she is lying in the Canal refitting but she appeared to be longer before she will sail than I wish to stop I can make no agreement. The other half owner, Degraives, being on board he also is going out with his family to settle at V. Diemen’s Land. (They) wished for all the information I could give them which I did to best of my judgment. Capt Macintosh appears to be quite the Gentleman. We all walked back calling in our way at a pastry cook’s shop and taking refreshment we parted and each party went their own way after they giving me an invitation to Dine with them. Went home and Dined after took a walk in the Minories and made some purchases.”

Mary Reibey’s Journal: Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February 1821<sup>32</sup>

The close of 1820 saw Peter Degraives and Hugh Macintosh living in London near to where the *Hope* was standing at dock in Limehouse Canal being refurbished.<sup>33</sup>

Macintosh had taken lodgings on the Ratcliffe Highway not far from where the *Hope* was docked.<sup>34</sup> The Ratcliffe Highway (now known as St George’s Street) ran alongside of the London dockside area of Wapping and was a place of lodgings and other establishments that serviced the needs of sailors and visitors to the docks.

Degraives most probably took his family to stay in Red Lion Square, Soho, where his mother and aunt shared a home. This was also only a short distance from where the *Hope* was berthed. Peter and Sophia Degraives now had seven children and, not long after arriving back in London, he and Sophia had all their children “re-baptised” *en masse* at the Anglican Church of St George the Martyr in Holborn,. This was the same church in which Degraives’ brother Henry had been baptised and where Degraives’ elder children had also been baptised before he fled to Scotland. There is no clear reason for this “re-baptism” though, with the family’s awareness of the dangers of their upcoming journey to Hobart, it is reminiscent of the baptism of Macintosh’s son William immediately prior to his return to England.

It is largely from the 1820-1821 journal of Mary Reibey, the ex-convict whose face now adorns the Australian \$20 note, that we gain an insight into what Macintosh and Degraives were doing in early 1821. Mary Reibey was one year younger than Macintosh and had been sentenced to be transported to Sydney, aged 13, for

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<sup>33</sup> It is interesting to note that in February 1821 Mary Reibey referred to Macintosh as “Captain”, which was his correct rank, but that by the end of 1821 he was always thereafter referred to as Major Macintosh even though he had not the hope or opportunity of receiving a genuine promotion.

<sup>34</sup> Mary Reibey Journal, 1821 Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February

supposedly stealing a horse. It was a severe sentence and it has been argued that female felons, such as Reibey, frequently received the sentence of transportation to Australia for minor offences to help balance the chronic shortage of women there.<sup>35</sup> Four years later, she married Thomas Reibey, a young Scottish civilian officer of the East India Company, who she had met on the ship that had transported her to Australia. Together the pair ran a number of unsuccessful business enterprises in Sydney of which, after her husband's early death, Mary became the sole proprietor. In late 1819, as a rich widow in her early 40s, she took her daughters back to England and Scotland to visit her family. They arrived in Portsmouth in June 1820.<sup>36</sup>

After a period in Glasgow Reibey returned to London in 1821 and, like Macintosh, took lodgings near the London docks in order to seek a suitable ship to take her back to Sydney. It was there that she made the acquaintance of Macintosh and, later, Degraes. Over the weeks which followed the acquaintance between Macintosh and Reibey appears to have become quite intimate and, ultimately, was to stretch over a number of years. Reibey may have been of working class origins, but she was a wealthy widow who was returning to the colonies where she was now an important member of society. Macintosh, on the other hand, was a distinguished widower, an officer and a gentleman, with upper class origins who happened to be of similar age and was bound for the same colonial outpost to start a new life.

Exactly when Mary Reibey and Hugh Macintosh first met we do not know. Reibey first mentions him in her journal entry for the Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February 1821 when she visited him at his Ratcliffe Highway lodgings from whence they took a coach down to inspect the *Hope* at Limehouse Canal. Mrs Reibey, whose businesses included shipping, immediately saw that the refurbishments to the *Hope* would have the ship in dock much longer than she was prepared to wait in London. Leaving the *Hope* they went for a walk together ending up at a pastry shop where they ~~took~~ refreshments" and then parted, though only after making a date to meet again for dinner.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> B. Kingston 'Women in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Australia' *Labour History* No. 71 (Nov. 1994) pp. 86-88

<sup>36</sup> Mary Reibey Journal, 1821 6<sup>th</sup> June Transcript A1454071

<sup>37</sup> Mary Reibey Journal, 1821 16<sup>th</sup> February

Ratcliffe  
Highway  
Circa 1850  
Unknown  
artist



Over the following weeks, Macintosh and Mary Reibey met a number of times, dining or taking tea together. On Sunday, 25 February, they dined with Peter and Sophia Degraives. After their meal Mary stayed on into the evening and was then walked back to her lodgings by Macintosh. Two weeks later, hearing that Macintosh was very ill, she called on him again at his lodgings where she found him being nursed by his sister Sophia.<sup>38</sup> The visit was repeated two days later and she again spent time with him and his sister. No doubt Macintosh would have impressed Mary with his tales of the exotic worlds of India and Persia while she would have told him of the great opportunities offered by life in New South Wales.

Reibey and Macintosh continued their friendship until June when, after almost exactly one year in Britain, Mary sailed for Sydney on board the *Mariner*. Her last visit with Macintosh was on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1821 on board the *Hope* immediately prior to her departure. The expectation of Macintosh and Degraives, at this time, was that they would themselves be sailing to Australia within a few months and no doubt Macintosh expressed his desire to visit Mrs Reibey at her home in Sydney as soon as practicable. This is, indeed, exactly what he did when he eventually arrived in Hobart, though the delay was to be years, not the months they had expected.<sup>39</sup>

By June 1821 Macintosh and Degraives appeared to be well on the way to achieving their goal. Work on the *Hope* was nearing completion and her hold was being filled with the machinery and agricultural equipment each man would need to fulfill their dreams.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Mary Reibey Journal, 1821 9<sup>th</sup> March; Mitchell Library Transcript A1454071

<sup>39</sup> Mary Reibey's Journal 1821 7<sup>th</sup> June

<sup>40</sup> Hugh Macintosh to Bathurst 20<sup>th</sup> June 1821: C.O. 201/106 \_M'

Degraves plan was to first build a sawmill, then a flour mill, and then make the most of whatever other opportunities to make money presented themselves. There were two obstacles for Degraves, one had been lack of capital, a problem that he more than partially solved by bringing in his brother-in-law as a partner. The other was his past, which he went to great lengths to obscure. With his supposed part ownership of the *Hope* as evidence of capital and with his convincing ability to bend the truth, Degraves was able to obtain credit from tradesmen and merchants for much of the machinery and other equipment he needed which Macintosh could not or would not pay for.

Macintosh's dreams of a new life in Van Diemen's Land were very different from those of his brother-in-law. He was neither an entrepreneur nor an industrialist. Like many of the "genteel poor" Macintosh wanted land and a lifestyle that he could not hope for in Britain.<sup>41</sup> He saw his involvement as Degraves' partner in the milling projects as an investment that would give him a return on his capital while he pursued his agricultural interests. To this end he had spent those funds that remained after the purchase and refitting of the *Hope* on items related to agriculture.<sup>42</sup> The basis of Macintosh's new life in Van Deiman's Land was to be his "...fine merino sheep and Yorkshire cattle and a selection of French vines."<sup>43</sup>

Through most of the 1820s the British government actively encouraged men with capital to migrate to Australia.<sup>44</sup> One of the incentives to encourage such persons was the possibility of a land grant of up to 2000 acres. Degraves and Macintosh made separate applications which were representative of the difference in their long term plans for their new life. Degraves wanted land with stands of the tall timber he had heard covered the slopes of Mount Wellington to the south of Hobart. Macintosh's requirements were very different; he wanted rich agricultural land where he could, with the help of the "seven servants of various occupations" he was bringing with him as well as convict labour, establish an agricultural estate.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps surprisingly,

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<sup>41</sup> D. MacMillan *Scotland and Australia 1788 to 1850* (Oxford) 1967 pp. 77-79 M. Roe *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-51* (London) 1965 pp. 36-37

<sup>42</sup> *Memorial of Hugh Macintosh to the H.E.I.C.* 13<sup>th</sup> October 1821 Utas Archives M10/7

<sup>43</sup> D. MacMillan *Scotland and Australia 1788 to 1850* (Oxford) 1967 p.85

<sup>44</sup> M. Dillon "Convict Labour and Colonial Society in the Campbell Town Police District: 1820 – 1839" 2008. pp. 47-49

<sup>45</sup> Hugh Macintosh to Bathurst 20<sup>th</sup> June 1821 C.O. 201/106 M

however, neither man had actually applied to the Colonial Office for permission to emigrate or for the “indulgences offered to free settlers” until late June 1821, more than six months after they had purchased the *Hope* and begun trying to sell passages to Hobart.<sup>46</sup>

At this point it is also worth considering the issue of who was the senior partner in this enterprise that was to become the Cascades Empire, for the significance of Macintosh’s position and contribution is a contentious one as there is an almost universal assumption that Degraives was the senior partner. Existing histories such as those by Allport, Bingham and Hooper largely ignore Macintosh’s contributions, as does the existing promotional material placed in the public domain today by the Cascades Brewery and associated organisations. There are several pieces of evidence that suggest Macintosh’s position in the partnership was the senior partner. Perhaps the strongest comes from the Macintosh and Degraives silver shilling, which was minted in the Boulton Mint at Soho.



Although the coin was stamped with the date 1823, Macintosh and Degraives probably hit upon the scheme of making the tokens after talking with Mary Reibey in 1821 who would have alerted them to the chronic shortage of specie in Sydney and Hobart.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Hugh Macintosh to Bathurst 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1821 C.O. 201/106 M; *HRA 3<sup>rd</sup> series* Vol. 2 p.2.

<sup>47</sup> The coin itself is of great interest historically because it is generally acknowledged to be the first piece of decorative art to use the word Tasmania to describe Van Diemen’s Land and also the first piece of decorative art to use the image of a kangaroo. R. McNeice *Coins and Tokens of Tasmania, 1803-1910*, 1969: [www.sterlingcurrency.com.au/research/1823-macintosh-and-degraves-shilling](http://www.sterlingcurrency.com.au/research/1823-macintosh-and-degraves-shilling), 15/5/2010.

The coin is called the Macintosh and Degraives shilling because on one side the inscription says “Macintosh and Degraives Saw Mills”. The placement of Macintosh’s name first is a clear indication of his considered prominence in the partnership, which is supported by the fact that he was the sole registered owner of the *Hope*.<sup>48</sup> And although many modern authorities ascribe the manufacture of this coin to Degraives, it is more likely that Macintosh was responsible, especially since they were made at the Soho Mint, which was owned by Matthew Boulton who was a friend and associate of Macintosh’s father-in-law, William Nicholson. There were reportedly 2,000 of these silver shillings minted, which would have probably cost Macintosh around £150.<sup>49</sup> Further evidence for Macintosh’s prominence in the partnership is the fact that all correspondence to the Colonial Office which concerned their joint enterprise was signed “Macintosh and Degraives”, always with Macintosh’s name placed first.

By the time that the *Hope* was refitted and almost ready to sail, both men had invested a large portion of their available funds in the venture, even though they had not yet received recommendations for land grants. How much they actually spent is not clear, particularly in Degraives’ case where the evidence suggests that his actual cash investment was probably very little. In the case of Macintosh, various documents mention the amount of capital that he invested in the expedition was upwards of five or six thousand pounds.<sup>50</sup> About £3,000 is claimed as the cost of refitting the *Hope*, though this amount would seem to be excessive given later testimony and that the original cost of the vessel was only £850. It is more likely that the total cost of the *Hope*, including the refitting, would have been somewhat less than £2,000. Apart from his supposed half share in the *Hope*, Degraives claimed to have invested around £3,000 in machinery to take to Hobart, although this amount is likely to be inflated as a result of three separate compensation claims that will be described later in this chapter.<sup>51</sup> Macintosh himself in a letter to Lord Bathurst dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 1821, says

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<sup>48</sup> Further support for Macintosh’s senior position comes from the fact that in all correspondence concerning their joint venture, written by Degraives, to the Colonial Office the letters are all signed off as being from “Macintosh & Degraives”.

<sup>49</sup> The fate of these coins is not known, only about 50 have survived to the present day and all of these are in ‘very fine’ condition, indicating that they were probably never put into circulation.

<sup>50</sup> D.S. MacMillan states Macintosh had capital £5,000 plus half ownership of the *Hope*. The *Times* in 1823 records a total investment by Macintosh of around £6,000 plus the *Hope*, while Degraives, in his petition to the Lords of Admiralty mentions a figure of £7,000 including the *Hope*.

<sup>51</sup> *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 p.4

that even after purchasing the *Hope*, his animals, plants and agricultural machinery, he still had “disposable capital of rather more than £5,000”.

The exact state of the two men’s finances it is very difficult to establish. Suffice it say that the inflation of capital assets was a common ploy of migrants who attempted by such means to maximise the amount of land they would be granted.<sup>52</sup> It is most likely that Macintosh supplied most of the cash and that Degraives made his contributions to the expedition “in kind” with equipment (acquired on credit) and the promise that his expertise would have a tangible value once they arrived in Hobart. It is also likely that Degraives had less cash and more debts than Macintosh realised. However Degraives had never been one to let lack of money be an obstacle to his plans so his solution was to obtain as much credit as he could and then improve his cash reserves by getting as many fare-paying passengers on board the *Hope* as was possible. By altering the ship so it could carry about 90 passengers, with fares of between £30 to £50 per adult, Macintosh and Degraives would have expected to make somewhere around £2,500 profit after the cost of buying the cheapest provisions possible.<sup>53</sup> The critical factor was to leave London with the maximum number of passengers who would be fed at the lowest cost. This job naturally fell to Degraives who, like his father, was a clever and convincing liar and well capable of learning and practicing those tactics and deceptions used to exploit potential immigrants.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>R. Madgwick *Immigration into Eastern Australia 1788-1851* (London) 1937 pp. 52-53

<sup>53</sup> *London Courier* 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1822; *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 p.4

<sup>54</sup> R. Madgwick *Immigration into Eastern Australia 1788-1851* (London) 1937 p.158

## Chapter Twelve: The Hopeful Emigrants

Around April or May 1821 Degraives heard that a large group of Wesleyans were planning to migrate to Van Diemen's Land and were looking for a suitable ship to take them. These Wesleyans were intent on sailing to Hobart to join a congregation of family and friends who had already established themselves there.<sup>55</sup>

The Wesleyan movement was originally made up of members of the Church of England who sought a more personalised religious experience than was generally offered within the ritualised services of their Church. Founded by the brothers John and Charles Wesley in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the result of a shared religious experience, which occurred while they were both clergymen of the Church of England, the movement had the evangelical focus of spreading scriptural holiness across Britain. Whilst there had been no original intention of founding a separate denomination, John Wesley's strong emphasis on his followers having a personal religious experience and on striving for "Christian perfection" (a phrase which was intended to imply that all thoughts, words and actions should be governed by adherence to the scriptures and by "holy love") ensured such an outcome by the 1790's.<sup>56</sup> By 1820 the number of Wesleyans in Britain numbered over 200,000 and, with the movement's emphasis on evangelical and missionary activities, considerable numbers of Wesleyans had migrated to British colonies around the world.<sup>57</sup> Whilst the overt "collective" motive behind the Wesleyans' intention to move to Van Diemen's Land was of an essentially missionary or evangelical nature and influenced by the letters of Reverend William Horton, the Wesleyan missionary in Hobart, most also had personal reasons for making such a momentous move.<sup>58</sup>

When Degraives heard about the intended mass migration, he immediately set about convincing this little congregation to book their passage on the *Hope* with what was

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<sup>55</sup> Whilst in the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century members of this religious movement were generally known as Wesleyans, after the two brothers Wesley who were the founders, they later adopted the name Methodists, by which name they were known through the 20<sup>th</sup> century until combining with other Protestant congregations to form the Uniting Church.

<sup>56</sup> J. Stockard 'Moving from Sect to Church' *Review on Religious Research* Vol. 43, No. 1 (Sept., 2001) p.71

<sup>57</sup> Koss S. 'Wesleyanism and Empire' *The Historical Journal* Vol. 18, No. 1 (March, 1975) pp. 107-111

<sup>58</sup> P. Backhouse Walker *All We Inherit* (Hobart) 1968 p.62



from all existing accounts a sustained sales campaign aimed at the most influential members of the group. Degraives regularly visited the Wesleyan leaders at their homes to push the benefits of booking passage for the whole group on his ship and he represented the conditions on board the *Hope* ~~in~~ glowing terms”.<sup>59</sup> It was a ship, he claimed, with the space, facilities and provisions to enable the Wesleyan families to make the long, arduous journey to Hobart in relative safety and comfort. In particular Degraives focused his attentions on one man in the ~~influential~~ group, Robert Mather, a successful Scot from Lauder whose father had been a blacksmith. Mather moved to London in about 1795 to take up an apprenticeship with to a hosier named Romanes, also a Scot. Not long after Mather completed his seven year apprenticeship his master decided to go into semi-retirement and left Robert Mather in charge of his business. Eventually Mather took over the business, in which he prospered and grew to a point where he took up a larger shop at 20 Sun Street at Bishopgate in London.<sup>60</sup> Apart from being a successful shop keeper he was the superintendent of a Wesleyan Sunday School in London and the son-in-law of the highly respected Wesleyan missionary and editor of the Wesleyan’s national magazine, Reverend J. Benson. Mather met Benson’s daughter, Anne, at the Wesleyan Sunday school where they both taught. There appears to have been some initial resistance from the Benson family who owned houses and property in Leeds to the prospect of their daughter marrying a shopkeeper, but the devout nature of their prospective son-in-law appears to have overcome these prejudices.<sup>61</sup>

Mather’s reason for deciding to sell his successful business and take his family out of London was primarily due to the illness of his wife however behind this was a desire to own property as a free settler in the colonies and transcend his working class origins.<sup>62</sup> His views and expectations of life in Van Diemen’s Land were influenced by the books of William Wentworth: *A Statistical Account of the British Settlements in Australasia* (1819) and Captain Jeffreys’: *Geographical and Descriptive Delineations of the Island of Van Diemen’s Land* (1820), which had just been published. Mather was also influenced by face to face discussions he had with

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<sup>59</sup> S. Benson-Walker *Reminiscences of the Life of Sarah Benson Walker* 1884 p.5

<sup>60</sup> P. Backhouse Walker *All We Inherit* (Hobart) 1968 p.59

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>62</sup> D. MacMillan *Scotland and Australia 1788 to 1850* (Oxford) 1967 pp. 81-121

Wentworth himself.<sup>63</sup> These written accounts of the colonial life gave very positive, if not entirely accurate, impressions of the climate, resources and opportunities that existed for enterprising people with the capital to progress their fortunes.<sup>64</sup> Both books spoke highly of the advantageous climate in the colonies, particularly in Van Diemen's Land. The supposedly healthy nature of the Van Diemen's Land's climate was an important factor in Robert Mather's deliberations, for Anne's health deteriorated after the birth of their first child, Sarah and Robert became convinced that his wife's constitution was not robust enough to cope with the polluted city air which was becoming an increasing problem for its residents as the city became more and more industrialised. On the advice of their family doctor Mrs Mather took regular extended trips to stay by the English seaside where her health improved immediately only to deteriorate upon returning to the family home in the capital. Mather had originally intended to solve this problem by buying a business in one of the sea side towns such as Portsmouth or Ramsgate and moving himself and his family there, but after extensive searching he could find nothing suitable.<sup>65</sup> He was already aware that other Wesleyans, including some close personal friends, had moved to Van Diemen's Land and were doing quite well there in various fields of endeavour. So when he heard of other Wesleyans planning to move to the distant colony he joined with them to investigate the options available for transplanting his own family.

As the idea of a mass relocation grew amongst his congregation Mather brought together a group of successful Wesleyan luminaries to form a committee to ensure the correct choice of a vessel for the passage. Degraives' regular visits to Mather's family home, where he spruiked the benefits of taking passage on the *Hope*, are recorded in the memoirs of his daughter Sarah Benson-Walker (nee Mather), mother of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Tasmanian historian Peter Backhouse Walker.<sup>66</sup>

Through persistence and extravagant promises he had no intention of keeping Degraives eventually convinced Mather and the other committee members to book their group's passage to Hobart on the *Hope*. Whilst most of the congregation would travel steerage, Robert Mather engaged with Degraives to travel in the relative comfort

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<sup>63</sup> P. Backhouse Walker *All We Inherit* (Hobart) 1968 p. 62

<sup>64</sup> It would be reasonable to assume that Macintosh and Degraives had also read these same books.

<sup>65</sup> S. Benson-Walker *Reminiscences of the Life of Sarah Benson Walker* 1884 p.4

<sup>66</sup> These memoirs were later published as part of the larger work *All We Inherit*.

of “cabin class” (the early 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of today’s first class) for the benefit of his ill wife, as he was able to afford the considerably higher fares. Like his fellows he paid a significant deposit in advance to secure his passage booking him and his family into the *Hope*’s largest cabin.

The emigrants with whom Mather had joined were a mix of people from various professions and social classes and were travelling mainly as steerage passengers, dependant on their personal fortunes. Despite the difference in social classes the individuals of the group were closely bonded by their shared belief in Christian fellowship and the importance of living scrupulously honest and spiritual lives.<sup>67</sup> The committee which represented them consisted of six men. While it had originally been formed to make the choice of which ship the group should embark on it also oversaw the necessary negotiations with Degraives prior to making a down payment on their fares. As well as Mather, the committee included Mr John Dean, Mr Whyhall, Mr Jones, William Shoobridge and Joshua Drabble.<sup>68</sup> After several meetings through May and June in 1821 (some of the minutes of which still survive) the committee came to an agreement with Degraives that the Wesleyans would pay ten percent of their fares in advance, at the time of booking their passage, and then pay the balance immediately prior to boarding.<sup>69</sup> However, whilst Degraives initially agreed to those terms, it appears that they did not remain acceptable to him for long. Somehow he contrived to renegotiate their agreement and managed to get between 50% and 100% of their fares in advance payments—testimony both to Degraives’ persuasive powers and, perhaps, of his urgent need for ready cash.<sup>70</sup>

Around the time these negotiations were taking place Degraives and Macintosh engaged Captain Francis Allison as the *Hope*’s master for the voyage. Various contemporary accounts seem to suggest that Degraives may have negotiated some kind

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<sup>67</sup> F, McConnell ‘New Interest in John Wesley’ *The Journal of Religion* Vol. 20, No. 4 (Oct. 1940) pp. 340-358

<sup>68</sup> Shoobridge, after his arrival in Hobart, was initially persuaded by Governor Sorrel to become the superintendent of the government timber yards in Hobart. However he quit after a few years and devoted himself to growing hops. Drabble became the superintendent of the infamous Hobart Female Factory.

<sup>69</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/1/1

<sup>70</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/2/2

of deal in lieu of wages with Captain Allison, as the passengers' letters and notes indicate that Allison had shipped 50 tons of merchandise as freight aboard the *Hope*.<sup>71</sup>

After protracted negotiations and having received numerous verbal and written assurances from Degraives, the passengers arrived at the London docks early in August 1821 ready to move their goods and chattels on board in preparation for their departure before the end of August, the date agreed to by Degraives. This sailing date was important in order to avoid the storm season which traditionally began around the equinox which in 1821 would fall on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September.<sup>72</sup> When the passengers arrived at the docks, they were told that there were unexpected delays and that they could not board the ship for at least several weeks. Worse news was to follow, because of shortage of space they were also told that much of their freight could not be placed on the *Hope*.

The issue of freight was of great importance to all free settlers with capital as, prior to departing England, they generally converted their cash into trade goods that were known to be in demand in the colonies. These goods, such as shoes or cloth or tools, could then be sold for considerable profit on arrival and the new settlers could thereby increase the capital available for whatever long-term venture they had planned.

The unexpected delay and the lack of storage space necessitated some quick work by the Wesleyans to find another ship able to take the balance of their freight so that it would arrive in Hobart at approximately the same time as the *Hope*. To arrive in Van Diemen's Land with only a portion of one's possessions and have to wait around for their arrival was undesirable, yet the alternative of having them arrive some time prior to the disembarkation of their owners was even less desirable as it would invite pilfering. The delay presented a particular and major problem for William Shoobridge whose freight included a significant number of hops plants and cuttings with which he hoped to establish agricultural production to supply the colony's beer brewers. The hops would not survive a long delay in London. Degraives made it clear that there was no choice in the matter so the committee did the best it could on short notice and

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<sup>71</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/4/1; M10/6

<sup>72</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/2/2

organised for a considerable quantity of the Wesleyans' freight to be sent on to Hobart on another ship, the *Denmark Hill*. Unfortunately the latter was not scheduled to leave London until around the end of 1821 and so would arrive in Hobart several months after the *Hope*, leaving the emigrants without many of the items they would need to establish their new lives.

It was mid-October before the passengers were eventually able to board the *Hope*, almost two months after the promised departure date and well into the storm season. Once on board it quickly became obvious that conditions were not as Degraives had promised they would be. He had, at their various meetings assured the wary and economically conservative Wesleyans that the *Hope* was a top-class vessel that was well-suited for the long voyage and possessed of adequate space to ensure the comfort of even the steerage passengers and their children. The God-fearing Wesleyans had taken Degraives on his word, both spoken and written, and had expected him, as a gentleman, to honour his promises.<sup>73</sup> However as the Wesleyans boarded the *Hope* they saw decks crowded with crates and other freight, including Macintosh's Merino sheep, his Yorkshire cattle and probably a horse or two. When the steerage passengers climbed down the ladder to reach their quarters below deck, they discovered that conditions in that dark space were cramped beyond any reasonable expectation. Even the cabin passengers, who had paid premium prices for their passage, made similarly distressing discoveries of Degraives' deceptions as they were directed to cabins that bore little resemblance to those that had been described.<sup>74</sup> For example, Robert Mather had been relegated to a much smaller cabin than the one he had been previously shown by Degraives and for which he had paid the full fare of £263.10.6, in advance, in order to secure the most comfortable passage for his ailing wife and young children.<sup>75</sup> To make matters worse, Mather soon discovered that the cabin he had been promised was occupied by Degraives and his family and that they had no intention of moving out.<sup>76</sup>

Accommodation for the steerage passengers was much worse. Indeed the space was so cramped that they did not even have enough room to set up a table to eat off. A

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<sup>73</sup> Minutes of Committee Meeting June 29<sup>th</sup> 1821 Utas Archives M10/1

<sup>74</sup> *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 p. 4

<sup>75</sup> Utas Archives M10/4 /2

<sup>76</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/4/2

number were forced to sleep on the floor; there not being sufficient space to hang a hammock.<sup>77</sup> Conditions became even worse when on the night before the ship was due to leave London the sleeping passengers were disturbed by dock workers moving more crates of goods and equipment (belonging to Degraives, Macintosh and Captain Allison) on board the already overcrowded ship.<sup>78</sup>

The next morning, the passengers' committee met to organise a letter of complaint to the Lord Mayor of London about conditions aboard the ship, but before this could be done Captain Allison took the *Hope* down the Thames and into the English Channel headed for Lands End and the vast expanses of the Atlantic Ocean where the Captain's word was the law.

With no other options open to them, they made a formal, but impotent complaint to Degraives who dismissed them out of hand. Next they tried Allison who said he was bound to act on the owners' orders. Finally they went to Macintosh whom they considered to be an honourable man who, like them, had also been duped by the unscrupulous Degraives.<sup>79</sup> It appears that though Macintosh attempted to act as a mediator, Degraives refused to speak to any deputation nor would he make any concessions to any of the demands put to him. This placed Macintosh in a difficult position. He had invested heavily in the ship and the expedition, probably on the basis of Degraives' enthusiasm and optimistic arguments. It is indeed possible that up until he had become fully committed to the voyage, Macintosh had little understanding of the scale of the deception that his brother-in-law wrought upon the unfortunate Wesleyans. But now confined in the small ship that carried his fortune and future he found himself surrounded with the irrefutable evidence that his partner was a scoundrel. Macintosh must have known that, once again, there was nothing he could do but play the hand that fate had dealt him. No doubt he recalled the day when, outside the gates of Seringapatam, he had been forced to turn and fight British troops, knowing that, not only was this a battle that he could not win, but that his fellow mutineers within the walls of Seringapatam were not going to leave the safety of the fortress to rescue him. As the *Hope* sailed into the English Channel Macintosh turned

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<sup>77</sup> *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 p.4

<sup>78</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/4/3

<sup>79</sup> R Mather *A few of the particulars of what has passed between the Captain and owners of the Hope*. Utas Archives M10/4 pp. 1-7

his back on the passengers and aligned himself with Degraives and from then until they arrived in Hobart three years later he abided by his brother-in-law's tactics—he had no option to do otherwise.<sup>80</sup>

With the loss of Macintosh's support it became clear to the passengers that there was nothing they could do other than to make the best of a bad situation and endure the cramped conditions with fortitude although the voyage to Hobart would be long. Only a few days later, however, they discovered further deceptions which made their already straightened circumstances far more precarious.

In the course of the negotiations with Degraives the Wesleyans had agreed on a set of basic requirements that would be guaranteed before they would pay him the portion of their fare money which he required as a deposit. These included that the *Hope* be surveyed by an independent shipping surveyor, chosen by the Wesleyans, but at Degraives' expense. Somehow, however, Degraives managed to avoid this. Another requirement was that the ship should "leave the Lizard by the 1<sup>st</sup> of September" to avoid the storm season. Degraives again failed to keep his promise.<sup>81</sup> Lastly they required a written list of the provisions, including food, water, wine and spirits, which would be available to both steerage and cabin passengers on a daily basis throughout the voyage. Degraives supplied such a list, which guaranteed generous portions of good-quality provisions, the cost of which was included in the fare.<sup>82</sup> No doubt having calculated that they would be well away from English shores before the passengers discovered the true extent of the ship's victualling requirements, Degraives reneged on this too. Luckily for the passengers, however, nature intervened.<sup>83</sup>

After only two days at sea Macintosh's ship was caught in a terrible and prolonged storm that caused considerable damage to the *Hope* as well as to other shipping in the Channel. Captain Allison sought shelter from the gale force winds and crashing waves

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<sup>80</sup> Utas Archives Manuscript M10/4/4

<sup>81</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/2/2 (The Lizard, in Cornwall, is the most southerly point of England.)

<sup>82</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/1/2

<sup>83</sup> In fact supplying seriously sub-standard provisions was a regular deception practiced on migrant passengers by unscrupulous ship owners. By interesting coincidence Mary Reibey suffered from the same scam on her journey back to Sydney in the *Mariner* where the deception was discovered a couple of weeks into the trip. Her ship was forced to sail into port where the passengers pooled their money and reprovisioned the ship themselves.

by anchoring behind the Goodwin Sands off the Downs. This was normal practice although the Sands were, and still are, a well known graveyard for shipping.<sup>84</sup>

Although partially sheltered from the storm it was not long before the *Hope* began leaking at an alarming rate and the passengers became aware of the ship's severe structural problems.<sup>85</sup>

Anchored at sea in a leaking ship, locked below decks, pounded by wild winds and high seas, the dismayed Wesleyans discovered the next of Degraives' deceptions—the promised rations failed to materialise. In steerage, after only a week at sea, the children were crying from hunger. It transpired that their total daily food intake consisted of —only one small cup of tea and a piece of brown biscuit for breakfast and supper and about half a pint of brown barley and carrot broth with a grain of oatmeal in it.”<sup>86</sup> The wealthier passengers who dined in the cabin fared little better, for both the quality and quantity of the food provided was so far below the standard promised that Captain Allison was too embarrassed to sit down at the same table with them.<sup>87</sup>

As events transpired it was fortunate for the Wesleyan emigrants that the *Hope* had been caught in the storm whilst still in English waters, for the damage, including the loss of both her anchors and the destruction of the windlass, was so substantial that it forced Allison to run for repairs and shelter in Royal Ramsgate Harbour.

Once in harbour the distressed passengers, who had by now run out of such basic requirements as candles and coal for their cooking stoves, complained to the Ramsgate authorities that the ship was unseaworthy, overloaded with both cargo and passengers and under-provisioned. Customs Officers who inspected the ship upheld their claims and the *Hope* was impounded whilst Degraives and Macintosh were arrested for breach of the Passengers Act. Mr K.B. Martin, deputy harbour master of Ramsgate, took control of the *Hope* and placed her in a docking area for damaged ships. This duty required the *Hope* to be —lay ...on the ground” where she would not sink. The *Hope* was taken into the docks on the high tide to a preselected location

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<sup>84</sup> B. Bathurst *The Wreckers* (London) 2005 p. 28

<sup>85</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/6

<sup>86</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M10/4 p. 6

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*



here she was settled onto a bed of mud about one and a half feet deep, with the passengers and their goods still on board.<sup>88</sup>

Once the *Hope* had been seized protracted legal manoeuvrings began between the owners and the passengers during which all parties obtained legal advice and used whatever influence they could muster to achieve their desired goals. For the passengers, the initial goal was to get the *Hope* to a seaworthy state and resume their voyage, their committee even going so far as to offer to lend money to Macintosh (whom they still believed to be an honourable man) to have the ship repaired and got under way.<sup>89</sup> However, it soon became clear that this was not likely to happen given the extent of the repairs required and the confrontational attitude adopted by Degraives, who was seeking legal advice on how to have the passengers forcibly removed from his ship. After being made aware of Degraives' plans, the Wesleyans switched their efforts to trying to retrieve their passage money, the five pounds per ton paid for freight and their actual goods that were stowed below the *Hope's* decks. With limited options and holding in their minds the old adage that "possession is nine tenths of the Law" the passengers refused to leave the ship until their money and goods were returned to them. Without their passage money and their goods most would have been rendered destitute and unable either to continue on their journey or to re-establish themselves in England.

The priorities of Macintosh and Degraives were very different. The first was to get themselves out of jail and their ship released by customs; next was to retain the passengers' money; and then to get the *Hope* repaired through their insurance policy with Lloyds. Once these goals were achieved their plan was to get the *Hope* out of Ramsgate and be under way as quickly as possible for Hobart. There were several reasons for this, not least of which was the fact that Degraives had creditors pursuing him for payment of outstanding bills.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 p. 4

<sup>89</sup> R. Mather *A Few of the particulars of what has passed between the Captain and owners of the Hope*. Utas Archives M10/4/8

<sup>90</sup> *Memorial to the Honourable East India Company of Mr Hugh McIntosh* 13<sup>th</sup> October 1821. Utas Archives Manuscript M10/7

Some time during these complex manoeuvrings Captain Allison, appalled by Degraives' behaviour, resigned his position—an action that the now paranoid Degraives believed proved that Allison was in league with, or even the leader of, the passengers' revolt.<sup>91</sup> Allison was replaced, on paper at least, by a Captain J.H. Duke, a man unknown to the passengers and who appears to never have actually trod the decks of the *Hope*. It appears from Degraives' later letters, written from jail in Hobart Town, that Captain Duke was both Degraives' London agent and a friend or long-standing business associate upon whom Degraives could rely to do whatever he required in the way of putting false information on government paperwork.<sup>92</sup>

The *Hope* and her passengers remained in Ramsgate as weeks dragged into months. While Degraives continued to refuse to return their fare and freight money he sought advice as how his passengers might be got off his ship. But the Wesleyans stayed put and would not be moved, for they had no other options. Without the return of their money they would be stuck in England with the merchandise they had intended to sell for profit in the colonies. That same merchandise, if sold in England, could only be sold for a loss. On top of this, they had all quit their jobs, sold their businesses, vacated their homes and invested their life's savings in the move to Van Diemen's Land. To remain in England would have ruined them, so they had little choice but to stay on board the *Hope* and work for some form of resolution.

Trapped on board the ship, the passengers began an extensive cycle of prayer by hoisting the Bethel Flag up the *Hope*'s mast. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century this flag was used to indicate that a church service was taking place on board a ship and with it they invited other religious persons passing by to join them in prayer for a speedy resolution of their plight. And come they did. Amongst the English public there were growing feelings of sympathy for the passengers and outrage at the treatment they had received at the hands of Degraives. There were visits to the *Hope* by noteworthy public figures such as members of parliament and the church. One of these was Joseph Butterworth, the member for Dover and a close friend and supporter of William Wilberforce. He visited the Wesleyans aboard the *Hope* to assess the situation himself and was

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<sup>91</sup> *Memorial to the Directors of the Honourable East India Company of Mr Hugh Macintosh* 13<sup>th</sup> October 1821 Utas Archives 10/7/3

<sup>92</sup> Tasmania State Archives C S O 1/229/5619/pp. 1-37

ultimately pivotal in providing a solution to the *impasse*.<sup>93</sup> There were also sympathetic newspaper articles, both in England and in Van Diemen's Land, warning potential emigrants to be very wary when booking a passage.<sup>94</sup> Support for the *Hope*'s passengers also took more practical forms through assistance with their day-to-day material needs, which were becoming critical as the ship became infested with rats that ate into the meagre reserves of food. As news of the passengers' plight spread, Wesleyan congregations from across England contributed to their welfare with food and other material needs. And while the passengers waited for some resolution to their problem, the ship's owners had problems of their own. Macintosh had been imprisoned in Dover Castle whilst Degraives had somehow managed to gain release and was lobbying various influential people for a resolution to the dispute on his own terms.<sup>95</sup>

Eventually the deadlock was broken when Butterworth convinced Parliament to charter a vessel, the *Heroine*, to take the *Hope*'s passengers to Hobart where they eventually arrived toward the end of 1822, without ever getting their money back from Degraives.<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile, at Royal Ramsgate Harbour, Lloyds had agreed to repair the damaged *Hope* and the old ship underwent extensive repairs and some considerable improvement, including the expensive renewal of her copper sheathing. Whether it had always been Degraives' intention to create a situation whereby Lloyds would pay for the repairs and renovations that the *Hope* badly needed is impossible to determine. Robert Mather and other passengers claimed that he had always intended to either wreck the ship or run it aground and then claim the insurance money. While such a scheme seems unlikely at first glance, there is a body of evidence that supports

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<sup>93</sup> Joseph Butterworth was the independent member for Coventry from 1812 to 1818 and Dover from 1820 to 1826.

<sup>94</sup> *London Courier* 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1822, *Hobart Town Gazette* 20<sup>th</sup> May 1822. It is certain that Mary Reibey would have heard of the events taking place in Ramsgate and, as Macintosh's name was mentioned, it have adversely effected her opinion of him.

<sup>95</sup> University of Tasmania Archives M 10/4/5; Peter Degraives to Lord Bathurst 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1822 Bonwick Papers.

<sup>96</sup> The Wesleyan's final voyage to Van Diemen's Land aboard the *Heroine* is in itself a fascinating tale but not within the scope of this work. Of equal interest is the impact on Tasmanian society of many of the *Hope*'s original passengers but again this is not within the scope of this work.

the idea, for Degraives and Macintosh had insured the ship for about £3,000 which was probably about double their investment.<sup>97</sup>

Whatever his original plans, Degraives was ever a very adaptable opportunist. In his claim to Lloyds he argued that the *Hope* had been extensively damaged by the storm, and with the Lords of Admiralty and Lord Bathurst he claimed that the laying of the ship on the ground at Ramsgate after her seizure by Customs caused considerable additional damage and that customs officers had dropped overboard some small boxes containing very expensive machinery components, for all of which he demanded £7,000 compensation on top of the insurance money. While these claims were disputed by both the passengers and the Ramsgate Port Authorities, Degraives and Macintosh's financial position was improved greatly, for even though they did not get the full £7,000 claimed they still managed to secure £2,000 from Treasury for the supposed losses caused by Customs. They also retained the passengers' fare monies.

Despite these financial windfalls, Degraives was not content. He saw another opportunity for a substantial gain bringing a suit for libel against the proprietors of the *London Courier*. Degraives, who was a prolific litigant, claimed that he and Macintosh had been seriously slandered by the *London Courier's* article of January 1822 and that the newspaper, which sympathetically described the plight of the emigrants on board the *Hope*, had cost them both income and reputation. He sued for £10,000 for libel on the basis that the newspaper's claim, that Degraives and Macintosh had been using the *Hope* to orchestrate an insurance scam, was false. To put the sum claimed into perspective, it represented approximately 300 years' wages for a semi-skilled worker in the 1820s, or enough money to buy three brand new ships of around the *Hope's* size.

The libel hearing took place before a judge and jury on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1823 and, after hearing conflicting evidence from a large number of witnesses, the judge advised the jury that on a technical point the proprietors of the *London Courier* were, in law,

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<sup>97</sup> In his letter to Lord Bathurst dated 18<sup>th</sup> December 1822 Degraives states that they had insured the *Hope* for £2,000; in the *London Times* report of 5<sup>th</sup> March 1823 trial it was stated the *Hope* was insured for £3,000.

guilty of libel.<sup>98</sup> The jury's response was to award Degraives and Macintosh a trifling £300 in damages, it was such a small amount that it could reasonably be taken as a calculated insult.<sup>99</sup> It was a clear indication of where the jury's sympathies lay for it would not have even covered Degraives' legal costs.

The court action against the *London Courier* and the criminal charges for breach of the Passengers Act were not the only court cases in which Degraives was engaged prior to his departure. From the letters he later wrote from Hobart gaol it is clear that he had a considerable number of other cases running in various courts around London, in some of which he was the plaintiff and in others he was the defendant.<sup>100</sup> The potential consequences of the latter appear to have been substantially greater than the former which was why Degraives was clearly so anxious to depart for distant shores. On 19<sup>th</sup> September 1823 the renovated *Hope* finally left England with Degraives and Macintosh aboard, this time before the storm season got into full swing.<sup>101</sup> Before leaving England Macintosh took out another insurance policy with Lloyds although again some deliberate falsification of the facts took place presumably in an attempt to obscure the origins and ownership of the *Hope*. Such falsifications have continued to confuse maritime historians to the present day.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *London Times* 6<sup>th</sup> March 1823 p. 4

<sup>99</sup> K. McKenzie *A Swindler's Progress* (2010) p.284

<sup>100</sup> Tasmania State Archives CSO 1/229/5619 pp. 1-37

<sup>101</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette* 1<sup>st</sup> April 1824. p. 2

<sup>102</sup> The Lloyds Registers from 1800 to 1820 show that *Hope* was built in Bristol of English oak in 1793. However, when the *Hope* sailed out of English waters in 1823 she was registered with Lloyd's as a ship built in Venice. This error regarding the *Hope*'s origins was repeated in all following Lloyds registers and is still present in modern maritime history books where the *Hope* is mentioned such as in Ronald Parson's comprehensive book *Shipping Losses and Casualties in Australia and New Zealand*, which even states that the *Hope* was an American built ship.

### Chapter Thirteen: From Ramsgate Harbour to Hobart Town

In Autumn 1823 the renovated *Hope* headed down the English Channel then sailed south and west past the Lizard and Land's End. From there they took the normal zigzag route to Australia sailing south-west across the Atlantic to Rio de Janeiro where it took on fresh supplies. She then sailed east and south to catch the trade winds back across the Atlantic to Cape Town where she remained for some weeks. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1824 she set sail on the last leg for Hobart Town arriving in early April 1824. In total the voyage took seven months, almost double the normal time.<sup>103</sup>

When the *Hope* left England she was under the command of a new master, Captain Ansell. Ansell, like Captain Allison, seems not to have maintained good relations with the *Hope*'s owners and was soon replaced by a Captain S. Kormack (possibly in Cape Town, which might account for the delay there). Kormack, according to the Lloyd's register, remained in command of the *Hope* until she was sold at the beginning of 1826.<sup>104</sup> However, just as the ownership and origins of the *Hope* were obscured by Degraives, so too, it seems, was the identity of her Master. Contrary to information in the Lloyds records, local Australian newspapers such as the *Sydney Gazette* and the Hobart based *Colonial Times* continually stated in their "Shipping News" sections that the master of the *Hope* was a Captain Norris. Norris is even noted as being the master of the *Hope* when she arrived in Hobart for the first time in April 1824 with Degraives and Macintosh on board.

It is also interesting to note that the *Sydney Gazette* stated that when the *Hope* arrived in Hobart she carried a total of 43 passengers, including Mr and Mrs Degraives, their eight children and Hugh Macintosh. This was less than half the 92 passengers who had originally been crammed on board when the *Hope* set sail on her first, abortive, attempt to reach Van Diemen's Land in 1821.

Once the *Hope* had docked in Hobart the Degraives family and their cargo were unloaded at the wharf on Hunter's Island only recently connected to the mainland by

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<sup>103</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette* 1<sup>st</sup> April 1824 p. 2

<sup>104</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1825 p.2

the stone causeway which later became Hunter's Street. Interestingly Macintosh (who now styled himself Major Macintosh) stayed on board the *Hope*, which almost immediately set sail for Sydney to deliver goods and passengers there.<sup>105</sup> It can be safely assumed that Macintosh was travelling to Sydney to renew his acquaintance with Mary Reibey. Indeed there is significant evidence to suggest he did exactly that; for on the *Hope's* first journey out of Sydney a few weeks later she carried freight belonging to Reibey.

Macintosh stayed in Sydney for five months. When he set sail again on the *Hope* in early June 1824 it was to embark on the standard colonial trading circuit through Asia. Carrying fur seal skins purchased in Sydney or Hobart the vessel made first for China (usual ports of call were Hong Kong or Macau), where such items were in much demand. From China the *Hope* carried on trading or carrying freight between various Asian ports before arriving at the Isle of France (Mauritius) where she took on a cargo of "3,000 bags of sugar, 260 cases of wine, 30 [and] casks of treacle....." for Sydney where she arrived in the last days of December 1824 after a passage of 45 days.<sup>106</sup> The profits from this trading run would have gone some way to rebuilding Macintosh's fortunes for the early 1820's was a time of chronic shortage of ships in the Australian colonies it was clearly the intention of Macintosh and Degraives to use the *Hope* as a means of increasing their capital by completing and returning to the Asian trade circuit as frequently as possible.<sup>107</sup>

While the *Hope* was sailing the trading routes of Asia, Degraives was busy building the saw mill. He immediately saw that the most efficient way to power the mill was by water, rather than by steam as he had originally intended. Having surveyed the streams descending from Mount Wellington above Hobart, he determined the best site for his mill was at a place called the Cascades on the Hobart Rivulet, which lay just inside an adjoining block of land owned by a Mr. Robert Murray, a settler who had arrived in Hobart in 1821. Here began the first of numerous controversies in which Degraives would embroil himself in his new home.

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<sup>105</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 6<sup>th</sup> May 1824 p.2

<sup>106</sup> *Sydney Gazette* 31<sup>st</sup> March 1825 p.3

<sup>107</sup> S. Rickard *Lifelines from Calcutta* (Sydney) 2003 pp.64-68

Never one to let the possibility of a dispute stand in the way of his plans, Degraives simply surveyed the land and moved the boundary a little to the south and west so as to include the Cascades site in his grant rather than that of his neighbour.<sup>108</sup> It then appears that he bribed a government surveyor to ratify the alterations.<sup>109</sup> By the time Murray discovered the ruse, construction of the saw mill was well under way. A long legal battle followed, during which Degraives simply protested his innocence and continued as if he owned the land, building and operating in succession the saw mill, the flour mill and the brewery. Degraives initially appealed to Lieutenant Governor Arthur, but this appears to have fallen on deaf ears. When he subsequently appealed to Governor Brisbane in Sydney, Arthur advised Brisbane that the case amounted to a ~~most~~ glaring land job.”<sup>110</sup> Never one to be easily put off and ever the eager litigant, Degraives then tried his case in the Courts where he accused his neighbour of every kind of deception. The Court ultimately found in favour of Murray. When Justice Pedder gave his verdict in 1832, the mills had been supplying much-needed sawn timber and flour to Hobart Town for nearly seven years. Neither the colonial administration nor the court would have wanted to interrupt such an important activity and Pedder’s judgement, therefore, merely required Degraives to pay Murray £300 for the land he had usurped. While this was a substantial sum it was an outcome that would have suited Degraives well enough, for he had achieved his desire of owning the Cascades. Nevertheless, it did his reputation, already tarnished in Hobart by the *Hope* episode, no good at all.<sup>111</sup>

Shortly after work began on the sawmill Degraives attempted to convince Lieutenant Governor Arthur that he should be given a contract to supply Hobart Town with reticulated water, an idea that was clearly a revamp of his plans for the Isle of Lewis. In the meanwhile Macintosh had returned from Sydney and, within a short time had acquired a substantial property on the fertile northern bank of the Derwent River between Bridgewater and New Norfolk, directly opposite land granted to Arthur. He called his new home ~~“Lawn Farm”~~ and, with convict labour to do the hard work, he set about fulfilling his dream of establishing a landed estate, growing Bordeaux grapevines and raising merino sheep and Yorkshire cattle. Some time in early 1825

<sup>108</sup> Tasmanian Archives Office Series SC292/1/1. B. Hooper *Peter Degraives* 1969 p.10

<sup>109</sup> Arthur to Bathurst *Historic Records of Australia, Series 3, Vol. 2* pp. 566-567.

<sup>110</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 p.10

<sup>111</sup> M. Bingham *Cascades, a taste of history* (Hobart)1991 p.21



Macintosh's son William appeared on the scene. He was now a young man of eighteen, come to visit his father and cousins in Hobart. It would seem that William stayed for at least several months and made lasting friendships with his cousins. He left Hobart on the ship *Medina* for Calcutta on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1825, travelling cabin class.<sup>112</sup> William sailed from Hobart in the company of Captain and Mrs Cotton and their family. Captain Cotton had been a member of the Madras army and was probably a family friend.<sup>113</sup>

By the end of 1825, Peter Degraives' past had begun to catch up with him. People to whom he owed money in London had tracked him to Hobart and, using a local agent, instigated legal proceedings against him. In May 1826 Degraives was arrested and imprisoned for non-payment of his London debts. His life following his imprisonment in Hobart has been reasonably well documented in the works by Bingham and Hooper and will not be further explored here other than in ways that shed light on Macintosh's movements, which are not well known. It is sufficient to say that when his creditors' agents filed the necessary papers with the Hobart Court, Degraives refused to acknowledge the debts and began a series of complicated legal arguments designed to convince the courts and the government of his innocence. However, his efforts were in vain and he remained in prison for five years. In October and November 1826 Macintosh advertised in the *Hobart Town Gazette* that the partnership of Macintosh and Degraives was dissolved by mutual consent and that all the firm's debts would be paid by Hugh Macintosh.<sup>114</sup> This would have been a necessary legal ploy to insulate Macintosh from prosecution for Degraives' debts and also to prevent the saw mill being seized as part of Degraives' assets. The final settlement date offered for these debts was mid November 1826. It appears that after settling these debts Macintosh sailed to Sydney, where he finalised the sale of the *Hope* to the firm of Askwith & Co. sometime before the end of 1826.<sup>115</sup> The *Hope* had been operating primarily out of Sydney and had frequently been carrying goods

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<sup>112</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette* 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1825 p.2

<sup>113</sup> Some years later, in 1840, William's cousin Charles Degraives also travelled with one of the Cotton family with two "Bengali servants" on the ship *Munford*.

<sup>114</sup> It is important to note that this advertisement referred to the debt's of the partnership incurred in Hobart i.e. the partnership of the Macintosh and Degraives Saw Mills. Macintosh was not accepting any responsibility for Degraives' earlier debts.

<sup>115</sup> Lloyds Shipping Register 1827

belonging to Mary Reibey.<sup>116</sup> With the money from the sale of the *Hope*, the proceeds from its trading runs and any other remaining cash he still possessed Macintosh would have been comfortably positioned.

After the sale of the *Hope*, Macintosh seems to have disappeared from the Australian colonies for almost two years. There is no mention of his presence in any of the Sydney or Hobart newspapers other than a notice which appears in the *Hobart Town Gazette* on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1827 in which his name appeared on a list of unclaimed letters awaiting collection at the Hobart Post Office. As it was the practice for these to be advertised after they had been unclaimed for three months, this is a clear indication Macintosh was not in the colony.

Macintosh returned to Hobart on the ship *Wanstead* on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1828. The *Wanstead* had sailed from London on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1827 and stopped at the usual places on route.<sup>117</sup> There are two likely explanations for Macintosh's leaving Australia, one may have been to devise some remedy for Degraives problems and thereby get their projects back on line; the other may have been to chase the general's half-pay he had been promised by the Shah of Persia.

Because of the extensive delays in correspondence between Britain and Hobart any written negotiations towards a settlement between aggrieved parties could drag on for years with the delay between a letter written and a reply received often taking in excess of 12 months. This was highly undesirable if one party was languishing in jail. The only way to short circuit this process was to have a trusted third party travel back to Britain to handle negotiations face to face. It is certain that Henry Degraives was involved in this process because, in September 1827, Henry guaranteed by bond to —. . repay £263 2s 6d to Charles Jones, Dover, Kent, Gentleman.”<sup>118</sup> As the amount to be repaid was only one shilling more than the amount that Peter Degraives had received, and not repaid, from Robert Mather for cabin and passage on the *Hope* in 1821 it seems certain that Mather was in the process of launching legal action against Degraives to recover his passage money, which action Henry sought to prevent by

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<sup>116</sup> It is likely that Reibey had assisted Macintosh with making the right contacts in the shipping business in Sydney and in organising the sale of the *Hope*.

<sup>117</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette* 21<sup>st</sup> May 1828 p.4

<sup>118</sup> British Library India Office Records Reference: Z/O/1/10 No. 6357

repaying that money.<sup>119</sup> Unfortunately Macintosh's efforts did not result in Degraives immediate release and the latter remained in gaol for another three years after his erstwhile partner's return from the British Isles in 1828.

Having disembarked in Hobart on either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1828 (the *Wanstead* is recorded as having arrived on both dates) Macintosh would have almost certainly proceeded to the home of his sister Sophia, which was only a short walk from Hunter's Wharf. Sophia Degraives had been forced to vacate her home at the Cascades and was living with her eight children in a well appointed brick cottage at Wellington Bridge close to Hobart gaol and convenient to the general store run by the Jewish convict brothers Judah and Joseph Soloman.<sup>120</sup> Once he arrived at the cottage Macintosh would have spent some time explaining to Sophia the likely outcomes of his endeavours overseas as well as giving her other news from abroad. The following day it is also highly likely that he would have visited Degraives in prison and informed him of what he might now hope for. When his business in Hobart was complete Macintosh travelled up the Derwent River to Lawn Farm.

There is very little existing material that sheds light on Macintosh's life through the period from his return to Hobart in 1828 to his death in 1834. It is known that on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1828 he wrote an application for a land grant on the Elizabeth River near what is now Campbell Town.<sup>121</sup> However, Macintosh's last major contribution to Hobart's history occurred in this period. Once more this was instigated by an action of Peter Degraives who, whilst in prison, became close friends with Henry Savery, a fellow inmate imprisoned for debt. Savery, under Macintosh's direct patronage, would write Australia's first novel, *Quintus Servington*.<sup>122</sup>

Henry Savery was the sixth son of the wealthy Bristol banker John Savery. He was well educated, receiving a classical and commercial education. He did not follow his

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<sup>119</sup>Utas Archives M10/4 /2

<sup>120</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette* 6<sup>th</sup> December 1828 p.1. H. Maxwell-Stewart \_Land of Sorrow; Land of Honey\_ *A Few from Afar* ed. P & A Elias 2003 p. 14. Wellington Bridge was situated near the corner of Elizabeth and Liverpool Streets, about where the National Bank now stands. There is some anecdotal evidence that Sophia was able to afford to rent this house and support her eight children through the support of Henry Degraives and Macintosh and that she also made a small income from teaching.

<sup>121</sup> This was granted posthumously in 1836; for the benefit of his heir, refer correspondence between Degraives and Colonial Secretary's Office CSO 1/281/6767 pp. 255-257

<sup>122</sup> Now also known as *The Bitter Bread of Banishment*.

father into banking, but attempted a more entrepreneurial path that combined the editorship of the *Bristol Observer* with running an insurance brokerage and a sugar refining business. When all three businesses failed Savery was faced with financial ruin and in an attempt to rescue his fortunes resorted to forgery illegally procuring over £40,000 between 1822 and 1824. He was arrested in late 1824 on a ship trying to flee England for America. When confronted with his crimes and the fact that death by hanging was the likely sentence, Savery appears to have had a nervous breakdown and attempted to commit suicide. He remained on the verge of insanity for some time. In 1825 he was sentenced to death by hanging, yet despite the vast amounts of money involved Savery (like Degraives) had friends in powerful places. The day before he was due to be executed, he learned that his sentence had been commuted to transportation for life.<sup>123</sup>

Once in Hobart his high level of education, his personal charms and his skills in book keeping meant that he soon attained a privileged position and spent the first years of his sentence in relative comfort. However old habits died hard and by December 1828 he found himself in Hobart's debtors' prison. There he met Peter Degraives with whom he had much in common. Both were well educated, had a wealth of personal charm, were highly intelligent and were happy to bend the truth if it suited them. Interestingly both were also prolific litigants.<sup>124</sup> No doubt they found considerable comfort during their confinement through conversation.

In March 1830, when Savery came due for what we might now call parole, Degraives wrote to the Colonial Secretary requesting that he be assigned to Major Macintosh at Lawn Farm. The government agreed to the request and Savery was released into Macintosh's care, but with a stipulation which showed that Governor Arthur had a clear understanding of the weaknesses in Savery's character:

If Savory (sic) be discharged from Jail, I wish him to be assigned to Major Macintosh with the positive condition that he is to reside at his Farm in the neighbourhood of New Norfolk and is not to be allowed to Trade or be employed on his own account in any way. [You need a footnote \*\*\*]

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<sup>123</sup> C. Hadgraft; Ed. *The Bitter Bread of Banishment* (Sydney) 1984 pp. 7-22.

<sup>124</sup> C. Hadgraft; Ed. *The Bitter Bread of Banishment* (Sydney) 1984 p.23

It is not known if Savery and Macintosh knew each other before Savery was imprisoned (though this seems unlikely since Macintosh had been back in Hobart just a few months before Savery was arrested) or if Macintosh accepted him purely as a favour to Degraives. Regardless, it would seem that the two men clearly got on well together.<sup>125</sup> Though Savery was 15 years Macintosh's junior and a convicted criminal, they were both classically educated and would have been considered social equals. Certainly Macintosh respected and supported Savery's need and desire to write, for he allowed him the time and energy to write *Quintus Servington* while he was living at Lawn Farm.<sup>126</sup>

However, Savery was a multi-faceted person and did not engage himself only in writing while he lived under Macintosh's roof. His restless intellect seems to have been captured by the challenges of agriculture as he assisted Macintosh with the development of his property. Savery became quite enthusiastic in his embrace and application of agricultural principles, to the point where, in November 1834, he wrote to Governor Arthur (whose own farm was opposite Lawn Farm across the Derwent River) giving him detailed advice on what might be done to improve his fields.<sup>127</sup>

In late 1831, Peter Degraives was finally released from prison. Immediately afterwards the partnership of Macintosh and Degraives Saw Mills was re-established.<sup>128</sup> At this point the reason for the dissolution and subsequent renewal of the partnership is made clear. It was a simple device by which Macintosh and Degraives' assets could be protected from the claims of creditors. It was exactly the same reason that the ownership of the *Hope* remained solely in Macintosh's name and is a tactic still employed by potential bankrupts who transfer portions of their wealth to close family members so that when they emerge from bankruptcy or prison they can immediately draw on substantial assets. Thus it was that when Markham visited Degraives at the Cascades, in 1833, less than two years after being released from prison Degraives had already built his brewery, a brick kiln, a lime kiln and a laboratory. On top of that he

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<sup>125</sup> Indeed it would seem that the pair formed a close friendship for even after Macintosh's death Savery continued to live at Lawn Farm until he was declared insolvent in 1838

<sup>126</sup> C. Hadgraft; Ed. *The Bitter Bread of Banishment* (Sydney) 1984 pp 20-21

<sup>127</sup> C. Hadgraft; Ed. *The Bitter Bread of Banishment* (Sydney) 1984 p. 23

<sup>128</sup> Tasmanian State Archives *Wayne Index* \_McI'

was well advanced in the process of more than doubling the size of his family home at Cascades.<sup>129</sup>

In 1833, as the mills and new brewery flourished, the worsening of the effects of Macintosh's wounds meant that he now required almost constant medical attention, obliging him to spend most of his time in Hobart.<sup>130</sup> By 1833, when Edward Markham met Macintosh at the Degraives' home, he recorded that:

... Major Mackintosh (sic) who, I believe, at the Mutiny of the Madras Army, led his regiment against the King's troops. This was in the time of Sir George Barlow. He, of course, after the thing was quitted, left the Service and was many years in the Persian Service teaching them the European tactics etc. Major Mackintosh (sic) always lives with the Degraives and is considered the first. He has been severely wounded and is a good scholar. He teaches the young Degraives Latin etc.<sup>131</sup>

It seems that Macintosh now stayed with the Degraives family at Cascades, enjoying the company of his young nieces and nephews while Lawn Farm was left in the care of Henry Savery. By the end of 1833 it must have become clear to Macintosh that he was approaching the end of his days. From the events that followed it is apparent that word was sent to his son William, who would have been either in England or India. On the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1834 William Macintosh, in the company of his cousin Charles Degraives, arrived in Hobart aboard the ship *Merope* from Mauritius. Three months later, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 1834, Hugh Macintosh died beside the Cascades in the home of his sister and brother-in-law, surrounded by his family. By coincidence his good friend Lieutenant Colonel Henry Degraives died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1834 at Wallajahbad in India, the news of which would have reached Hobart about the time of Macintosh's death.

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<sup>129</sup> E. Markham *Voyage to Van Dieman's Land, March 1833 to February 1834* (London) p.13

<sup>130</sup> Degraives to the Colonial Secretary 6<sup>th</sup> July 1836 CSO 1/281/6767

<sup>131</sup> E. Markham *Voyage to Van Dieman's Land, March 1833 to February 1834* (London) p.14



The Cascades circa 1880

After Macintosh's death Degraives assumed sole control of the Cascades. Hooper states that Macintosh left Degraives his share of the business and also a 2,000 acre land grant on the Elizabeth River.<sup>132</sup> However, as Hooper did not know of William Macintosh's existence, and because the will has never been located, this may have been an assumption on her part.<sup>133</sup> It is more likely, as William was present at his father's death, that Degraives purchased or came to some other arrangement to acquire William's share. However as the fate of William Macintosh is not known, and there is no evidence to suggest he remained in Hobart, it is unlikely this question will ever be answered.

After Macintosh's death the businesses he and Degraives established continued to flourish, though not without Degraives managing to generate more conflict and controversy. By 1836 Degraives had added a flour mill to his operations at the Cascades, this mill was powered by a revolutionary, highly efficient water turbine of French design. In this same period Degraives also designed and constructed Hobart's first theatre, now the Theatre Royal. Initially this was done using his son Henry as his proxy and was financed through public subscriptions. However, as was common with most of his schemes, various disputes arose between the subscribers and Degraives, who he claimed, owed him over £2,000. As a result of these disputes Degraives ultimately became the theatre's owner, via a public auction, in 1839. The Theatre Royal remained a possession of the Degraives family until after Peter Degraives death.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives, Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 p.23

<sup>133</sup> The existence of William Macintosh was discovered by Anne Blythe, in 2007, while researching her work on the life of Sophia Degraives.

<sup>134</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives, Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 pp. 26-29

Also during this period Degraives attempted to start his ship building business, applying for a grant of waterfront land near the Mulgrave Battery. However it was not until 1841 that he received a suitable lease, near the end of Castray Esplanade at Battery Point. In this ship building venture, as with the theatre, it was his son Henry who, on paper, owned the business whilst the father actually controlled it. The ship building yard flourished carrying Cascades beer, timber, flour and general freight to the mainland and Europe. By 1847, with the launching of the 560 ton *Tasman*, Degraives could claim to have built the largest ship ever constructed in the Australian colonies, which claim remained true for another thirty years.<sup>135</sup> It is further testament to Degraives' abilities that the *Tasman* remains the largest sailing ship ever built in Tasmania.<sup>136</sup> By the end of the 1840's all of Peter Degraives' enterprises were flourishing, with even the theatre turning a small profit, so that he could now be reckoned (as Bingham claims) one of the most important merchants, not just of Hobart but of all the Australian colonies.<sup>137</sup>

However at almost every turn Degraives' scheming, arrogance and refusal to compromise, managed to make him enemies both amongst the general public and within the government.<sup>138</sup> This manifested in several ways, perhaps the most spectacular being when, during the particularly hot, summer of 1835-36 Degraives used his dam to stop the flow of the Hobart Rivulet, which was the sole source of water for most of Hobart Town's citizens. The government responded by sending a party of eighteen constables to tear open the sluice gates of his dam and restore the rivulet's flow. The dispute between Degraives' and Hobart's citizens over the right to the waters of the Hobart Rivulet continued for many years. On another occasion, aged 70, Degraives was imprisoned for threatening to have the editor of a Hobart newspaper, the *Guardian*, beaten up because he had written an unfavourable article about him.<sup>139</sup>

After a protracted illness, Sophia Degraives died in Hobart in May 1842, aged 53. Following her death Peter Degraives continued to grow his businesses until his own death at the Cascades on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1852, aged 74, leaving his business

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<sup>135</sup> M. Bingham *Cascade: A Taste of History* (Hobart) 1991 p.34

<sup>136</sup> R. Hartwell *The economic development of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1850* (Melb.) 1953 p. 157

<sup>137</sup> M. Bingham *Cascade: A Taste of History* (Hobart) 1991 p.35

<sup>138</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives, Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 pp. 21-26

<sup>139</sup> M. Bingham *Cascade: A Taste of History* (Hobart) 1991 p.23



empire in the control of his eldest son Henry who, only two years later, died suddenly at the age of 43. Of the three remaining sons John and Charles remained involved in the family businesses in Hobart though neither married. Degraives' youngest son, William, born in 1820, moved to Port Phillip where he became a wealthy merchant, flour miller and pastoralist. From 1860 until 1874 he was a member of the Victorian Legislative Council. He married in 1850 and died in Hobart in 1883 without issue.<sup>140</sup> William Degraives was used as a model for a "... narrow-minded, irascible... self made man" by the 19<sup>th</sup> century novelist Jessie Couvreur (Tasma) whose husband managed properties owned by him.<sup>141</sup> Two of Peter Degraives' daughters and eight of his grandchildren died in the wreck of the *Royal Charter* in a hurricane off Wales in 1859. His youngest daughter Deborah Hope Degraives married James Wilson who was a friend of William Degraives and later Premier of Tasmania (1869-72). So it was that, even though Peter Degraives had produced nine children including four sons, the Degraives line had disappeared from Tasmania by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However the business empire he built and the personal history he had fabricated would survive a great deal longer.

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<sup>140</sup> Australian Dictionary of Biography: Online edition. <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/AO4004b> (18 September 2010)

<sup>141</sup> P. Clancy \_Tasma- A Woman Novelist of Colonial Men- and \_Continental' Men' *Explorations*, No. 30; University of Melbourne. [Unimelb.edu.au/index.php/explorations/article/view/182/0](http://Unimelb.edu.au/index.php/explorations/article/view/182/0)

## **Conclusion: The Advantages of a Deceptive Distance**

The stories of Peter Degraives and Hugh Macintosh reveal two very different men who lived very different lives but were brought together by family connections and the possibilities offered by a new life in Hobart Town.<sup>1</sup> Macintosh had capital but, after a life spent in the military, he had no entrepreneurial or industrial experience. Degraives had ideas and plenty of business experience, but no money. As such, each needed the assistance of the other to take full advantage of the inducements offered by the British government to encourage “men of capital” to move to Australia.<sup>2</sup> The result of their union was the creation of one of the most enduring features of Tasmania’s economic landscape, the Cascades Brewery. As individuals each man was also directly responsible for two of the oldest, still existent, features in Australia’s cultural landscape. Macintosh, by supporting Henry Savery and allowing him both a place and time in which to write, was responsible for Australia’s first novel while Degraives was responsible for the creation of Australia’s oldest still operational theatre, Hobart’s Theatre Royal. Despite this and their equal contributions in the founding of the Cascades empire history has treated these two very differently: Macintosh’s life has been largely ignored whilst Degraives’ has been well documented, albeit inaccurately.

To a degree the treatment of these men’s lives is a reflection of the differences in the men themselves, while also being an indication of the biases that often exist within the processes of recording and disseminating history.<sup>3</sup> Whilst the examination of the histories of Hugh Macintosh and Peter Degraives has revealed much of what was previously unknown about the two men, as well as correcting various inaccuracies, it has not dealt directly with the question of why there has been such a pronounced discrepancy between the assumptions within the popular histories of these men and the archival record.

However the results of this work clearly demonstrate that the public view of Macintosh and Degraives has been shaped by how information has been placed within

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<sup>1</sup> G. Sherington *Australia’s Immigrants 1788-1978*(Sydney) 1980 pp. 28-31

<sup>2</sup> R. Madgwick *Immigration into Eastern Australia 1788-1851* (London) 1937 pp. 50-53

<sup>3</sup> Xinhui Liu ‘History: translation or Recording of the Facts’ *Asian Social Science* Vol. 5, No. 8 Aug. 2009 pp 3-7

the public domain, over time, by various public and private institutions. Further this work had shown that these institutions have relied primarily on myths created by Peter Degraives for the information from which they constructed their histories. The institution primarily responsible for the dissemination of the histories of these two men has been the Cascades Brewery. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Cascades published two histories, *A Page from the Past, the Cascade Brewery: the Degraives' Centenary 1824-1924* (1924) and *Cascades: a Taste of History* (1991). Both obliquely used the Degraives' story and its deep connections to Tasmanian history as a marketing tool to enhance the brand's image, reputation and products as well as to increase access to the tourism market. Cascades Brewery, in its creation of these histories, has, perhaps ironically, perpetuated the mythology that Peter Degraives himself created around his own life, helping him to complete the reinvention of his personal history.

One of the primary factors that protected Degraives' version of his life, during his lifetime and after, was the ~~tyranny~~ "tyranny of distance".<sup>4</sup> Degraives exploited the inadequacy of long distance communication between social and geographic centres to manipulate his history. Prior to the advent of the digitalisation of many archival collections around the world and their ready accessibility through search engines such as Google, the distance that separated the scattered fragments of information needed to assemble Degraives' life story ensured his falsehoods avoided detection.

However once the various pieces of Degraives' life are assembled it becomes possible to understand why he fabricated so many aspects of his past, for it was surely a habit that began early in his life, after he, his brother and mother were abandoned by Dr. Degraives. Ashamed of his father's antics and desperate to raise his social standing Degraives, somewhere around the age of 20, began to subtly manipulate his history. He removed the r to turn Degraives into Degraives; he implied that his father had died rather than run away; he exaggerated his father's professional and social status. This propensity for playing with the truth grew as the physical and chronological distance from his past increased. By the time Degraives had established himself in Hobart, where he hoped, not only for financial success, but to be finally accepted as a member of the colonial ~~upper~~ "upper classes", the truth of his life had become very bent

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<sup>4</sup> G. Blainey *The Tyranny of Distance* (Melb.) 1966

indeed.<sup>5</sup> By the time of Hugh Macintosh's death on Christmas Eve, 1834, almost everything to do with Degraives' life prior to his arrival in Van Diemen's Land was either a gross exaggeration or a complete fabrication.

The use of distance by Hugh Macintosh was considerably different from that of his brother-in-law, for the only chapter of his life that he might have been inclined to obscure was the Madras Mutiny but that had been so thoroughly documented in contemporary British press that his role in it was well known. Rather, it can be argued, Macintosh used distance as a means for solving problems in his life. As with Degraives, Macintosh's involvement in this process began fairly early in life, with his choice of a vocation in India at age fourteen.<sup>6</sup> Later, when he could not find a wife in India, he solved the problem by returning to England. Then, after his court martial in 1810, unable to follow his career path in the British military, he used distance to continue his career in Persia where his skills and experience would not be retarded by the effects of his involvement in the mutiny. When he returned to Britain from Persia with insufficient capital to enable him to live the lifestyle he desired, he used distance again, the move to Hobart, to progress to the next phase of his life where he could put the capital he had accumulated to work more effectively. There was only one instance where Macintosh used distance as a means of personal reinvention; this was his adoption of the rank of Major immediately prior to his departure for Hobart.

The lives of Hugh Macintosh and Peter Degraives demonstrate how the "tyranny of distance", whether between the colonies and the homeland or between cities and towns within Britain, created a situation wherein the personal histories of individuals could be deliberately hidden, obscured, ignored or falsified.<sup>7</sup> Whilst there is a body of work on this subject, it has tended to focus on people who have used the isolation of the colonies to create an entirely new identity for themselves. Examples of this are found in the story of Arthur Orton, a butcher from Wagga who successfully impersonated the dead Baronet Roger Tichborne for almost a decade, deceiving even Tichborne's elderly mother.<sup>8</sup> Or the case of Jonathon Hugo who, in 1811, convinced

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<sup>5</sup> M. Roe *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-51* (London) 1965 pp. 39-40

<sup>6</sup> While the vocational choice was probably strongly influenced by his parents Macintosh would still have seen the solution to the problem being solved by him moving to a distant land.

<sup>7</sup> K. McKenzie *Scandal in the Colonies* (Sydney) 2004 pp. 1-5

<sup>8</sup> R. McWilliam *The Tichborne Claimant* (London) 2007

the commandant of Launceston, Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon that he was a ~~pr~~ince of the Royal Blood”.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps the most infamous colonial impostor was the accomplished identity thief, John Dow, an ex-convict who, in New South Wales, in 1833-34, successfully posed as Viscount Lascelles, the son of the Earl of Harewood. Dow, like Degraives and many other convincing or ~~pr~~ofessional” liars seems, eventually, to have come to believe his own lies.<sup>10</sup> However the issues raised in this work belong to a different tradition of impostors, persons from a respectable background who, on arrival in the colonies inflated, exaggerated, invented or glossed over aspects of their past in order to gain a degree of social prestige or financial advantage that would have been difficult in Britain.<sup>11</sup> Such falsification of one’s social connections, credentials or status was essentially snobbery and was common in both Britain and Australia in order to gain social advantages, though there was a growing trend in Australian society to view such endeavours with distain as is shown in the below piece from the 1857 *Melbourne Punch*.<sup>12</sup>

### Colonial Snobbery

Many circumstances of late years have encouraged the supposition that snobbery was on the wane; but it ever and anon breaks out in a fresh place... Snobbery, like thistles and Scotchmen, thrives anywhere. It must, else how could it have taken root in a new country such as ours... and often self-entitled dignitaries as are to be found.<sup>13</sup>

Yet it was the distain that the upper classes, the ~~ge~~ntlemen”, in both Britain and Australia, felt for people who had risen from humble beginnings to wealth gained in ~~trade~~” which created the social barrier that Degraives had, for most of his life, tried desperately to break through and which, upon his arrival in Hobart, he finally succeeded in doing.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> G Blaikie *Scandals of Australia's Strange Past* 1963 pp. 263-268

<sup>10</sup> K. McKenzie *A Swindler's Progress* 2010 p. 293 and L. Friedman ‘Grimes of Mobility’ *Stanford Law Review* Vol. 43, No. 3 (Feb., 1991) pp. 637-658

<sup>11</sup> V. Ellis *Louisa Anne Meredith: a tigress in exile* (Hobart)1979 pp. 55-56

<sup>12</sup> G. Sherington *Australia's Immigrants 1788-1978* (Sydney) 1980 pp. 45-48

<sup>13</sup> ‘Cdonial Snobbery’ *Melbourne Punch* 22 January, 1857 p.200

<sup>14</sup> G. Sherington *Australia's Immigrants 1788-1978* (Sydney) 1980 pp. 45-48; J. Hirst *Sense and Nonsense in Australian History* (Melb.) 2005 pp. 354-355

To do this he had to hide his apprenticeship with Railton and Ranking and his failed and insignificant cotton mill. Instead of a being a bankrupted merchant he was —. . first in the firm of two country banks ... and principle Capitalist of a considerable Mercantile house in the city of London” who owned a vastly successful string of mills that employed thousands of people.<sup>15</sup> With this false description of his past Degraives portrayed himself as a wealthy capitalist rather than the struggling speculator he actually was and any failure that beset him was the fault of Napoleon or some other dubious character.<sup>16</sup> In the colonies in the 1820’s such reinvention was crucial for gaining access to land, cheap labour and government contracts as well as those connections that could also bring social and economic benefit.<sup>17</sup> However such snobbery contrasted strongly with the beginnings of the, so called, egalitarian Australian society inferred in the *Melbourne Punch* article, wherein people were to be judged on their present merits rather than their past errors and the adoption of the traditional British class system was generally abhorred, as was demonstrated by the overwhelming public resistance to Wentworth’s attempt to set up a “Bunyip Aristocracy” in the late 1830’s.<sup>18</sup> Mary Reibey and other ex-convicts or their children (such as Wentworth), who progressed to become valuable members of society are good examples of this and they stand in stark contrast to people, such as Degraives, who fabricated the magnitude of their past achievements and social stature in order to impress colonial peers.

Yet despite his faults and falsehoods there can be no denying the actual brilliance of Peter Degraives’ mind and size of his achievements during the thirty odd years he lived in Hobart Town. Although he was not an architect he designed and built numerous substantial and impressive buildings that still stand today. Although he was neither an engineer or a miller or a brewer he designed, built and operated mills,

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<sup>15</sup> Degraives to Arthur 5 August 1828; CSO/1/154/3714

<sup>16</sup> Hooper B. *Peter Degraives, Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 pp. 70-71

<sup>17</sup> K. McKenzie *Scandal in the Colonies* (Sydney) 2004 pp. 80-85 McKenzie K. *A Swindler’s Progress* (Sydney) 2010 pp. 210-211

<sup>18</sup> P. Russell ‘The Brash Colonial: Class and Comportment in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Australia’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (Sixth Series)* (2002), Vol. 12: pp. 434-443

breweries and such; whilst in 1847 his shipyards built the largest sailing ship ever built in Tasmania.<sup>19</sup>

Hugh Macintosh leaves a very different impression: he was a man who had seen and done so much that he would have had a right to brag about. He had begun his life at one of Britain's most exclusive schools and had the social connections that Degraives only dreamed of. He had met the Shah of Persia and was closely acquainted with the Crown Prince. He had travelled the length and breadth of India leading his troops into some of Britain's most bloody and important battles of the period under one of the Empire's greatest and most famous generals. Yet even Macintosh could not resist the opportunity for reinvention offered by his move to Hobart. He raised his rank from Captain to Major, probably in his mind justified by his rank of General in the Persian Army. Indeed, such self promotion was not unusual, and was rarely challenged; Lieutenant James Mudie, who fled Britain in bankruptcy and disgrace, who was a man more like Degraives than Macintosh, did the same. Dismissed from the Royal Marines for deliberately avoiding active service, and for fraud, Mudie fled England and arrived in Sydney in 1822. Like Macintosh, somewhere between leaving England and arriving in Sydney, Lieutenant Mudie became Major Mudie.<sup>20</sup> Like Degraives Mudie completely re-invented himself in his new home and, through the patronage of Sir Charles Forbes, soon became a magistrate and pillar of society in the Hunter Valley where he owned 4,000 acres and a reputation for extreme cruelty to his convict labourers.<sup>21</sup>

Both Degraives and his father were early examples of what have been described as –crimes of mobility” wherein individuals, so inclined, were able to take advantage of the increased mobility, both social and geographical, that was a feature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> In his work on this subject Friedman maintains that the more mobile a society becomes the easier it is for a person to create a false identity and then use that identity to exploit a situation or person for financial advantage. Interestingly the crime of bigamy, particularly for financial advantage (such as committed by Dr Degraives

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<sup>19</sup> B. Jeffery ‘Maritime archaeological investigations into Australian built ships wrecked in South Australia’ *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* Vol. 21 Issue 3. 1992; p. 211

<sup>20</sup> K. McKenzie *Scandal in the Colonies* (Sydney) 2004 p. 55

<sup>21</sup> K. McKenzie *A Swindler's Progress* (Sydney) 2010 pp. 229-233

<sup>22</sup> L. Friedman ‘Crimes of Mobility’ *Stanford Law Review* Vol. 43, No. 3 (Feb., 1991) pp. 637

in Edinburgh) is singled out by Friedman as the “crime of mobility” that most proliferated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, followed by falsification of one’s social status or professional qualifications.<sup>23</sup>

However unlike his father, who was without a doubt a bigamist and a quack, Peter Degraives was, somewhat like the famous modern impostor Frank Abagnale Jr., not only able to convince his peers that his false qualifications were real but could produce results as if he had the actual qualifications he claimed.<sup>24</sup> Whether he managed this by employing people who were suitably qualified or whether, as this work suggests, this was the result of his actual genius may never be known. Regardless of which is the case Peter Degraives can certainly be regarded as Tasmania’s most successful liar.

Unlike his brother-in-law and Major Mudie, Hugh Macintosh does not seem to have shown any desire to promote himself socially. It appears he was content to remain quietly at home either with his nephews and nieces teaching them Latin and Greek at the Cascades or enjoying the peaceful life at Lawn Farm on the banks of the Derwent River. A thorough search of Hobart’s newspapers, journals and other contemporary material in the public domain from the period 1824 to 1834 did not reveal any mention of Macintosh attending any social gatherings in Hobart. Rather it seems that he consciously avoided the social whirl of Hobart where, with his exotic military background, he would most likely have been feted.

Hugh Macintosh and Peter Degraives were very different men who, together, left an indelible mark on Tasmanian history and it is testimony to Degraives’ success in fabricating his history that he finally gained the social standing he sought, though in the process he probably made more enemies than friends.<sup>25</sup> And it is a testimony to the saying “The victor writes the history.” that those who later wrote of him appear to have unconditionally believed his stories.

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<sup>23</sup> L. Friedman ‘Crimes of Mobility’ *Stanford Law Review* Vol. 43, No. 3 (Feb., 1991) pp. 637-658

<sup>24</sup> F. Abagnale Jr. *Catch Me If You Can* (New York) 2002. Abagnale assumed eight separate identities and successfully impersonated, for extended periods, an airline pilot, a senior doctor and a lawyer.

<sup>25</sup> B. Hooper *Peter Degraives, Pioneer Industrialist* 1969 pp. 30-32 & 70-71



## **Postscript**

In completing this work I am ultimately left with the feeling of its incompleteness, this not because of any serious inadequacy in the information about Macintosh or Degraives themselves but by the frustration of not being able to offer more than a tiny glimpse of the women in their lives. In the case of Degraives we have several women who were pivotal in his life but of whom there is no historic record. Firstly his mother, Anne, who supported Degraives and his brother, then there is the mysterious French widow Deborah Decharme who appears to have financed Degraives early entrepreneurial activities and then acted for him when he was bankrupt. Lastly Sophia Macintosh, a woman who not only bore and raised his nine children but, like so many 19<sup>th</sup> century women, loyally followed her husband around Britain and, eventually, to the very ends of the earth. While Peter Degraives was five years in prison in Hobart Sophia Degraives somehow supported her large family as well as her husband. In her own way Sophia Degraives was as much responsible for the success of the Cascades businesses as her brother and her husband yet there is almost nothing recorded of her life. Similarly there exists almost nothing of the short but fascinating life of Mary Macintosh, a young woman who mixed with some of the most interesting and forward thinking people of her time. Though her life was short we can but wonder at the spirit of a young woman prepared to leave England for a life in a hill fort high on the Mysore plateau. The only other woman we know of to feature in Hugh Macintosh's life was Mary Reibey, well known in her time and famous in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as the face on the \$20 note, yet except for the scant records of her letters and journal the details of even this woman's life are virtually unknown. The fact is that the full story of the lives of Macintosh and Degraives will never be known for the stories of the women with whom they shared their lives and dreams are lost.

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